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## ABSTRACT

This curriculum is intended to further thoughtful examination and responsible action among high school students about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues. Unlike other curricula this discussion is not in the context of civil or political rights but in the broader context of human rights. These rights, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, include, among others, the right to education, identity, security, assembly, expression, employment, health, and family--all relevant to the current discussion of LGBT rights. The activities in the curriculum promote appropriate action in addition to reflection and discussion. Students are asked to take responsibility for the homophobia that causes human rights abuses. The curriculum aims to prepare students for responding in meaningful ways to such abuses. It is divided into the following parts: "Part 1: Introduction"; "Part 2: Activities" contains: (1) "Words Really Matter: Examining Language at School"; (2) "Are Gay Rights Special? What Does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Say?"; (3) "What If Things Were Different: Charting the Effects of Change"; (4) "Is It a Crime To Be Gay? Debating Tolerance in a New Democracy"; (5) "What Must Be Done To Achieve Equality? Evaluating Different Approaches"; (6) "I Now Pronounce You...Same-Sex Marriage Legislation"; (7) "Youth Dealing with Homophobia: Stories from Real Life"; (8) "Rights Abuses around the World: What Can We Do?"; and (9) "Taking the Human Rights Temperatures of Your School"; and "Part 3: Appendices" contains: "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and "Resources." (Contains a resource list of 30 books, 12 videos, and 11 Web sites.) (BT)

SO

# LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER RIGHTS

## A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

by David M. Donahue

ED 459 127



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Topic Book 3

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- THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA HUMAN RIGHTS RESOURCE CENTER

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS DECADE  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION,  
1995-2004

# LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER RIGHTS

A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

BY DAVID M. DONAHUE



HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION SERIES

*Topic Book 3*

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The Human Rights Education Series is published by the Human Rights Resource Center at the University of Minnesota. Edited by Nancy Flowers, the series provides resources for the ever-growing body of educators and activists working to build a culture of human rights in the United States and throughout the world. Topic Book 3, ***Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights: A Human Rights Perspective*** is jointly published by Amnesty International USA, The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), and the Human Rights Resource Center. Other publications in the series include:

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## ABOUT THE PUBLICATION PARTNERS

**Amnesty International USA** is a worldwide voluntary activist movement working towards the observance of all human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards.

**OUTfront** is Amnesty International's Program on Human Rights and Sexual Identity. The goals of OUTfront include combating human rights violations against LGBT persons around the world; increasing public awareness of international human rights abuses based on sexual identity; promoting international policies to protect people who face abuses because of their sexual identity; and strengthening links between activists within Amnesty International, other human rights groups, and the LGBT community.

**Amnesty International USA's Human Rights Educators Network** is made up of educators and activists from all parts of the country who seek to further learning about human rights in formal and informal education.

For further information about Amnesty International USA, its OUTfront Program or the Human Rights Educators Network contact:

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**The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)** is the largest national organization working to end the destructive effects of anti-gay bias in schools. With over 80 chapters nationwide, GLSEN works on both local and national levels to assure that each member of every K-12 school community is valued and respected, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. GLSEN believes that such an atmosphere engenders a positive sense of self, which is the basis of educational achievement and personal growth. Since homophobia and heterosexism undermine a healthy school climate, GLSEN educates teachers, students, and the public at large about the damaging effects these forces have on youth and adults alike.

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**The Human Rights Resource Center at the University of Minnesota** facilitates human rights education and effective practices by individuals, organizations, and others working at the grassroots level to advocate for human rights. The Human Rights Resource Center is dedicated to raising awareness of the relevance and meaning of human rights in the United States and fostering citizen action to guarantee human rights for all. It offers human rights trainings, capacity-building services, materials, and fellowships and publishes The Human Rights Education Series.

For further information about the Human Rights Resource Center contact:

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Special thanks to Reading International Support Centre (RISC) for permission to adapt and reprint material in Activities 4 and 5. For more information about their excellent resource, *Human Rights for All?*, write to RISC at:

103 London Street  
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UNITED KINGDOM

Thanks to the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), for materials used throughout this curriculum, such as the background material on Kelli Peterson in Activity 3 and the testimonials in Activity 7. Activity 6, "I Now Pronounce You... Same-Sex Marriage Legislation," is taken from GLSEN's *At Issue: Marriage, Exploring the Debate over Marriage Rights for Same-Sex Couples*. The complete curriculum on same-sex marriage is available through the GLSEN Bookstore (800/247-6553 or <http://www.atlasbooks.com/glsen/>).

Thanks also to David Shiman of Amnesty International's Educators Network and Kristi Rudelius-Palmer of the Human Rights Resource Center for allowing Activity 9, "Taking Your School's Human Rights Temperature," to be adapted for this curriculum.

Many thanks to Nancy Flowers of Amnesty International's Educators Network and Scott Hirschfeld of GLSEN who provided new ideas, fresh material, critical judgment, and invaluable support throughout the project.



*Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and  
inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the  
foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world . . .*

Preamble  
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948



## USING THE CURRICULUM

Amnesty International gave the name "Breaking the Silence" to its first international campaign in 1994 on behalf of the rights of sexual minorities. Such a name has an ironic twist when used to describe human rights education about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights. Though teachers, administrators, and textbook publishers are often hesitant to talk about sexual orientation, our schools are hardly silent.

Taunts of "faggot," "lesbo," and "homo" make the hallways a hostile place for many students. A 1993 survey for the American Association of University Women noted that male students in the 8th through 11th grades believed that being called gay was a worse form of sexual harassment than having their clothes pulled off or being forced to engage in a sex act. Parents and pressure groups argue over books in the school library and the curricular content of classes. The American Library Association reports that one of the "most challenged" books of the 1990s was *Daddy's Roommate*, a children's picture book illustrating a loving relationship between a young boy, his father, and his father's male partner. One fifth grade teacher in California was disciplined for allowing a 15 minute, student-initiated discussion of the "coming out" episode of the television show *Ellen*, a moment in television history that made the cover of *Time* magazine.

Some of the sounds "breaking the silence" are coming from students seeking justice and dignity for all regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity. High school students in Bremerton, Washington rejected a proposal to oust student council members who were openly homosexual. A group of Raleigh, North Carolina high school students handed out fliers responding to posters ridiculing gays. In 1993, Massachusetts became the first state to outlaw discrimination against gay and lesbian students in public schools. The measure was signed into law in large part because of work by gay and straight students who held marches and rallies, lobbied legislators, and testified at State House committees. Connecticut, Wisconsin, and California have since followed suit.

This curriculum is intended to further thoughtful examination and responsible action among high school students about LGBT issues. Unlike other curricula, however, this discussion is not in the context of civil or political rights but in the broader context of human rights. These rights, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, include, among others, the right to education, identity, security, assembly, expression, employment, health, and family—all relevant to the current discussion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights.

The activities in this curriculum promote appropriate action in addition to reflection and discussion. Students are asked to take responsibility for the homophobia that causes human rights abuses. This homophobia may be in their schools in the form of harassment or violence against gay students, in their community during referenda elections seeking to deny gays and lesbians their equal rights, or in the world when persons are imprisoned, tortured, and executed for their consensual relationships with adults of the same sex. This curriculum prepares students for responding in meaningful ways to such challenges.

The activities in this curriculum can be taught individually or all together in sequence. The more they are integrated into general classroom investigations of human rights, the better since such integration allows students to see LGBT rights even more clearly in a human rights framework. While this curriculum was written specifically with an audience of secondary school age students in mind, the activities can be adapted for middle school students as well as adults engaged in anti-homophobia training.

As a whole, the activities in this curriculum aim not only to balance examination of and action on behalf of global and local issues, but also to help students understand how the local and global issues are connected. When students and staff create a safe school environment for sexual minority youth, they ensure all students with equal access to education and they engender respect that can contribute to appreciation for the human rights of all. In schools where students and faculty do not feel comfortable bringing up the institution's homophobia, the activities with an international human rights focus can provide an opportunity for introducing discussion of the rights of sexual minorities that may lead back to examination of the school. In other schools, students may be concerned about their own setting, but lack knowledge about the larger international human rights context for addressing homophobia. In such cases, the activities about the local context can become the springboard for looking at the larger world.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights: A Human Rights Perspective* also balances the objective and the subjective. For many teens, sexual orientation and gender identity can be one of the most difficult topics to discuss seriously. However, activities like those featured in this curriculum, role playing and case studies from around the world, allow students to engage in serious discussion about human rights and sexuality without making their own sexual orientation or gender identity the issue. Of course, in many schools, students' real or supposed sexual orientation is often the issue, and young people are ready to discuss the topic with adults who can provide needed information and new perspectives. This curriculum provides both facts and a variety of perspectives on what human rights means for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons.

Drawing on this information and these perspectives, teachers can address another dilemma in teaching about human rights and sexual orientation and gender identity—balancing a safe environment for all students while at the same time encouraging the free flow of ideas and opinions. Again, the activities in this curriculum have been developed with this balancing act in mind. Role plays, for example, allow students to present a variety of viewpoints, including homophobic ones, for discussion and analysis without the discussion devolving into personal attacks. Such methods allow teachers and students to examine and judge ideas rather than each other. Where students and teachers believe they are ready to connect objective discussion to more personal reflection, the activities provide opportunities to do so.

Whether the discussion focuses on human rights abuses around the globe or in the school halls, this curriculum is intended to help students realize their responsibility to take action to promote human rights and respond to their abuse. Through such action, we can insure schools and a world recognizing and celebrating human rights for all.

**PART I:**

# Introducing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights as Human Rights



*I attempt to teach my students to be willing to defend not only their own rights but the rights of others to live free from oppression as well. Sometimes this means challenging "the way things are" (as defined by adults) and thus realizing that all adult rules are not absolute. This is an important lesson. Social change can only occur when children acquire the ability to look critically at existing structures.*

Leonore Gordon

"Countering Homophobia, A Lesson Plan"

*Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*, Vol. 14, No. 3 & 4, p. 28

## UNDERSTANDING LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS

In 1948, the 56 members of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Recognized as one of the most influential and inspirational statements of human rights, the UDHR proclaims that recognizing the "inherent dignity and . . . the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world."

Human rights are the rights a person has simply because he or she is a human being. Human rights are **inalienable**: you cannot lose these rights any more than you can cease being human. Human rights are **indivisible**: you cannot be denied a right because it is "less important" than another right. Human rights are **interdependent**: all human rights are part of a complementary framework. For example, the right to participate in government is directly affected by the right to free expression, to get an education, and even to obtain the necessities of life.

Human rights are also defined as those basic standards people need to live in dignity. To violate someone's human rights is to treat that person as less than a human being. To advocate for human rights is to demand that the human dignity of all people be respected. In claiming these rights, everyone also accepts the responsibility not to infringe on the rights of others and to support those whose rights are abused or denied.<sup>1</sup>

Since the adoption of the UDHR, the concept of human rights has entered international law and popular consciousness in much of the world. At the same time, many governments around the world continue to violate the human rights of their citizens. Consider the following news items from 1998, the year of the UDHR's fiftieth anniversary:

- In Afghanistan, at least five men convicted of homosexuality were placed next to walls and then buried as the walls were toppled on top of them.<sup>2</sup>
- In Mexico, the Citizen's Commission Against Homophobic Hate Crimes documented 125 murders of homosexuals, many including extreme violence. Many of the murders were dismissed by police who refused to investigate them.
- In the United States, Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old student at the University of Wyoming, was brutally beaten in an attack motivated in part by his homosexuality. His skull was smashed, his face and head mutilated, and his body tied to a wooden ranch fence in freezing weather. He died several days after being found by bicyclists who, at first, mistook his body for a scarecrow.

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<sup>1</sup> This definition is taken from Nancy Flowers (ed.), *Human Rights Here and Now: Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Minneapolis: Human Rights Resource Center, 1998. This curriculum guide contains more information on the history of human rights and lessons introducing human rights to K-12 students.

<sup>2</sup> The bullet points in this and the following two sections are taken from "The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission Celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." Press release, December 1998.



As these cases highlight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons are subject to human rights abuse in countries in every region of the world. The violations they face include killing as well as imprisonment, torture, and abuses aimed specifically at sexual minorities, such as practices aimed at forcibly "changing" their sexual orientation. These violations of UDHR Article 3, "the right to life, liberty, and security of person," are only the most extreme examples of violations of the rights of sexual minorities.

Also during 1998:

- In Argentina, Buenos Aires police raided gay bars during October detaining over 100 persons. (Article 20 of the UDHR states that everyone has the "right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.")
- In Sweden, authorities deported a gay asylum seeker from Iran. Repatriated Iranian gays face possible imprisonment or death in Iran. (Article 14 of the UDHR declares the "right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.")
- In India, theaters showing *Fire*, are attacked because of the movie's lesbian story line. Many theaters subsequently refuse to screen the film. (Article 27 of the UDHR holds that all have the "right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community.")
- In the United States, two adult men are arrested in Houston under Texas' sodomy law for consensual homosexual conduct in private. Though rarely enforced, about half of all U.S. states have similar laws. (Article 7 of the UDHR states that "All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law." In addition, Article 12 maintains, "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation.")

These cases demonstrate how human rights violations of LGBT persons extend beyond their rights to life and liberty and include the full spectrum of rights accorded in the UDHR.

Not all the news fifty years after passage of the UDHR is so bleak, however.

- In South Africa and Ecuador, newly adopted constitutions pledge equality before the law (Article 7 of the UDHR) regardless of sexual orientation. Also in South Africa, the highest constitutional court struck down laws criminalizing homosexuality as a violation of the right to privacy (Article 12 of the UDHR) and because they affected the "dignity, personhood, and identity of lesbian and gay people."
- In Canada, that nation's Supreme Court ruled that when the Alberta legislature omitted "sexual orientation" from the province's anti-discrimination laws, it was violating the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The court ruled that such protection should be read into the law. (Article 8 of the UDHR describes the "right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental human rights granted by the constitution or the law.")
- In Colombia, the Constitutional Court decreed that private religious schools cannot ban gay students and that firing gay teachers is unconstitutional. (Article 26 of the UDHR says everyone has the "right to education.")

These last three snapshots from 1998 illustrate that the rights of sexual minorities are increasingly being seen as human rights. Many of those who drafted the UDHR probably would not have considered the rights of sexual minorities in 1948, given the homophobia and general lack of consciousness about LGBT issues at that time.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted in reaction to the inhumanity committed during World War II. Like Jews, gypsies, and the disabled, gay men and lesbians were singled out by the Nazis for slave labor and extermination. As many as 100,000 gay men were sent to the concentration camps where they were killed or worked to death. They were required to wear pink triangles, a symbol that has since come to stand for the international gay rights movement. Several thousand lesbians, considered "anti-social elements" and forced to wear black triangles, met similar fates. Despite these atrocities, the UDHR contains no specific guarantees of fundamental human rights regardless of sexual orientation.

While subsequent human rights documents have addressed discrimination of other specific groups based on age, race, or sex, no international human rights document explicitly mentions sexual orientation or gender identity. As the examples describing abuses against sexual minorities at the beginning of this introduction suggest, such protection is needed and deserved. For this reason, evolving conceptions of human rights that come to include sexual orientation, such as those in South Africa, Ecuador, Canada, and Colombia, are especially significant.

In theory, general human rights documents protecting the rights of all should also protect the rights of sexual minorities. In fact, many persons opposing specific protections of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons often argue that sexual minorities are already covered by existing law and thus no further mention is needed. In some cases, general human rights laws have been used specifically to secure rights for lesbians and gays. For example, based on the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, laws against homosexual acts between consenting adults were struck down in Ireland and Cyprus.

While lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons are winning victories based on general human rights law, just as often these laws fail to provide sexual minorities with necessary protection from human rights abuses for a number of reasons. Sexual minorities often fail to report violence against them. They may fear their sexual orientation will be made public, making them or their families targets for further violence. They may fear that their complaints will not be taken seriously or that such complaints will be used as reprisals against them. For good reason, they may lack trust in the authorities who are supposed to protect them. In many countries, police are some of the worst violators of sexual minorities' human rights. For example, as this is being written, Amnesty International reports that *Entre Amigos*, an organization in El Salvador that provides sex education to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, as well as the general public, is the target of intimidation and violence, including killings and death threats from members of the National Civilian Police.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International Urgent Action, Extra 159/99, Fear for Safety/Death threats, El Salvador, 12 November 1999.



In many countries, sexual minorities are so marginalized, they lack the most basic resources to defend themselves, publicize abuses, or rally support. For example, such an environment made it easier for the President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, to compare lesbians and gays to pigs. In 1996 his government prevented a gay and lesbian organization from participating in an international book fair in Harare, the capital. He said, "I find it extremely outrageous and repugnant to my human conscience that such repulsive organizations, like those of homosexuals, who offend both against the laws of nature and the morals and religious beliefs espoused by our society, should have any advocate in our midst and even elsewhere in the world."<sup>4</sup>

Governments also hide their persecution of sexual minorities using the cover of other legal charges. Men and women who are imprisoned, tortured, and even executed for no reason other than their sexual orientation or gender identity are often falsely charged with other crimes such as "vagrancy," "hooliganism," and "causing a public disturbance." In some countries, declaring oneself gay is seen as "causing a public disturbance." Once arrested, sexual minorities are sometimes subjected to cruel and unusual forms of punishment, including bogus "medical treatments" to "cure" them of their "disease."

As a result of cultural and religious taboos, some governments are reluctant even to admit the existence of gays and lesbians. Not surprisingly, these same governments are even less willing to protect their human rights. They claim that abuses against sexual minorities are carried out by individuals and that the government cannot control such actions, ignoring that most countries have laws that do protect individuals from persecution based on religion or race by other individuals.

In some countries, protection for gays and lesbians may be labeled a foreign, "western" concept being forced upon them. In other countries, governments maintain the right to discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons based on religious authority and criminal law. Such laws, however, are vulnerable to challenge under international law. In 1994, the UN Human Rights Committee ruled that laws criminalizing homosexual acts in the Australian state of Tasmania violated Australia's obligations under Articles 2 (non-discrimination) and 17 (right to privacy) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In 1997, Tasmania repealed its anti-gay law.

One of the most powerful ways to promote the continued evolution of LGBT rights as human rights and to interrupt the cycle of abuses against sexual minorities is through human rights education. Such education includes learning about human rights (for example, violations of rights and international laws protecting rights) and learning how to respect others and support and defend their human rights. Obviously, schools can play a key role in creating a culture that supports the human rights of all, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons. Ironically, schools are sometimes among the least safe environments for LGBT youth.

Human Rights Watch, the largest U.S.-based human rights organization, is currently investigating whether the treatment of LGBT youth in schools constitutes a violation of fundamental

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Amnesty International, *Breaking the Silence: Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation*. London, 1997: 38.

human rights. Their investigation was initiated after a conversation with representatives from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) and the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. Lambda and GLSEN argued that youth under the age of 16 are legally required to attend school and that parents turn over their responsibility for the safety and well-being of their children to teachers and administrators. Schools, therefore, become custodial settings, responsible for the well-being of those placed in their charge. While human rights organizations have paid careful attention to the treatment of those placed in custodial institutions such as prisons and psychiatric hospitals, no human rights organization has looked at schools in the same way using a human rights perspective.

Such attention is needed in schools. GLSEN has collected compelling evidence that homophobia in schools is destructive to the education of all students, not only LGBT students who are direct targets. Straight students have been abused after being mistaken for gay, and all straight students are shortchanged a lesson in respect when school culture routinely marginalizes some students because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In addition to the right to an education (Article 26 of the UDHR), all students in school have the right to be free from violence (Article 3), the right to freedom of expression (Article 19), and the right to freedom of assembly (Article 20). Statistics compiled by GLSEN suggest that violence against LGBT youth is pervasive. Recent school board decisions in Salt Lake City, Utah and Orange County, California to ban gay-straight alliances from meeting at public schools demonstrate threats to the rights to assembly and free expression.

In addition to the unsafe environment for LGBT youth, school curriculum routinely ignores sexual minorities. Writers' sexual orientation is rarely mentioned, even when such information is crucial to understanding their work. LGBT persons are left out of almost every history textbook. Few teachers ask students to consider sexual minorities in the context of lessons about civil or human rights.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights: A Human Rights Perspective* is intended to help teachers introduce thoughtful examination and responsible action among high school students about the rights of sexual minorities. Unlike other curricula, however, this discussion is not set in the context of civil or political rights but in the broader context of human rights at the international level as well as at the most local level—school. By learning to examine thoughtfully the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons and by gaining practice in the skills needed to prevent abuses and secure human rights, we can face the fear and shatter the silence that allows sexual minorities to be killed, tortured, and arbitrarily detained in countries throughout the world. We can also create schools where the human rights of all are respected.

## **PART II:**

# Activities

*[E]very individual and every organ of society . . .  
shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect  
for these rights and freedoms . . .*

Preamble  
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

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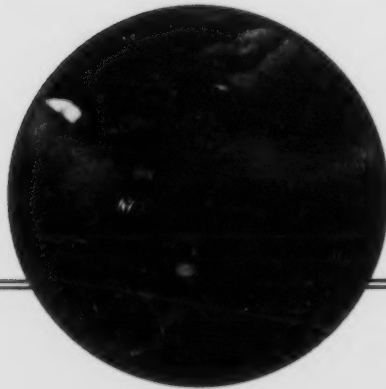
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*[I]t seems to me that as educators we have a special responsibility to try to break that cycle [of homophobia]—to fight gay-bashing through education as we try to fight all types of prejudice through education. Any violation of an individual's rights and freedom and respect in this country is a threat to the very foundation of our democracy as a whole.*

Sandra Feldman  
President, United Federation of Teachers

## ACTIVITY 1

# WORDS REALLY MATTER

## Examining Language at School

### OVERVIEW

Language shapes how people perceive themselves, others, and the world at large. The purpose of this activity is to help students make explicit the denotations and connotations of the words they see, hear, and use to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons.

### OBJECTIVES

- To examine the power of words to shape how we come to understand sexuality
- To challenge harmful connotations or stereotypes in language used to describe sexual orientation
- To gain sensitivity and multiple perspectives on language used to describe sexual orientation

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Age Level:</b>     | High school to adult                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Time:</b>          | About 60 minutes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Materials:</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Handout 1: <i>Words Around Us</i></li><li>• Handcut 2: <i>Defining Terms</i></li><li>• Handout 3: <i>GLSEN'S National School Climate Survey</i></li><li>• The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (official or kids' version)</li></ul> |
| <b>Subject Areas:</b> | Social studies, language arts, health education                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

### PROCEDURE

#### Part 1: Collecting data

*Important: This part must begin one week before the rest of the activity.*

One week prior to the activity, students should work individually to record any example of language they see, hear, or use in school connected to lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender persons during the week. In some cases, language may be used to describe a particular person, while in other cases, it may be used to describe either a real or abstract group of people. In still other cases, the language may be used to describe something that has no connection to people (e.g., a student may hear a classmate describe a homework assignment as "gay"). The language may be positive, negative, or neutral in its connotations.



Distribute Handout 1: *Words Around Us* and review with students how to collect data.

Students should record the data so they can get a sense of how often words about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons are used. It may not be practical (or safe) for students to record information in the presence of the people using it. In such instances, they should record the information later. They may want to record all the information at once at the end of the day, doing their best to recall as many specific instances of language as possible. At the minimum, students should record information on a daily basis. Waiting until the end of the week will probably lead to forgetting many particular incidents.

Students should record the exact language they see, hear, or use, even though they may be offended or have very strong feelings about the words they see or hear. Stress the importance of recording accurate data.

Under the heading "Who used," students should NOT write anyone's name. Instead they should record whether the language was used by a student, teacher, staff person, or administrator. Under the heading "Where used," students should record in what part of the school the language was used (e.g., hallway, playground, locker room, classroom, cafeteria).

Students should also record under the heading "Intention" the intention of the speaker using the language. Was the language used to describe without placing value on lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender persons? Was it used to hurt, demonize, or portray people in a negative light? Was it used to praise, celebrate, or portray people in a positive light? Was the language used seriously, mockingly, or comically? If students are uncertain or have contradictory ideas about how the language was used, they should note that here.

Remind students to make note of their personal response in the last column labeled "Reactions" in a phrase or two. Tell students that in one week, the class will be compiling all the individually collected data, analyzing it from different perspectives, and drawing conclusions.

## **Part 2: Compiling and analyzing data**

As a whole class, compile the data individually collected by students during the past week. Use a transparency or a large butcher paper version of Handout 1: *Words Around Us* to record the class data. Ask a student volunteer to state one word or phrase he or she heard during the past week and write that phrase in the second column. Ask for a show of hands by other students who heard the same word or phrase and record that information in the same column next to the word or phrase. Check to see how many days during the past week the word or phrase was used and record that information in the "Word/Phrase" column. This will illustrate how frequently this language is used. Under the column "Who used," record the various types of people who used this language in the past week. Similarly, record where the language was used. Under the "Intention" column, list the ways the language was used. In some cases, the same word or phrase may have been used with different intentions.

After students have volunteered all the examples of language they heard in school, discuss the following questions:

- What words and phrases are most commonly heard at our school to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender persons?
- In general, how are these words used? (What is the intention?)
- In what parts of the school is the most negative language used?
- By whom is the most negative language used?
- What is your personal reaction to these data?

### **Part 3: Defining words**

During Part 1 of this activity, students will have recorded a number of words used to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students. Tell students that in the next part of this activity, they will become sensitive to how they use language and to the meanings of words that the class will use to discuss sexual minority youth, including some words that they may have recorded earlier.

Give each student one of the cards from Handout 2: *Defining Terms*. Ask students to find another person in the class who has a card that makes a match between word and definition.

After all the students have found a classmate whose card makes a match with their own, ask one pair of students to read their word and definition. Follow by asking another pair to read a different word and definition until all seven words have been defined.

#### **Gay**

A person attracted physically and emotionally to some persons of the same sex. Usually used to describe men.

#### **Lesbian**

A woman attracted physically and emotionally to some other women.

#### **Queer**

Differing from the heterosexual norm. Although sometimes used in a derogatory sense, the word is also used without any negative intentions in colloquial and academic settings as an umbrella term to describe gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender persons.

#### **Bisexual**

A person attracted physically and emotionally to some men and some women.

#### **Transgender**

A broad term used to describe individuals whose gender identity and expression, when measured against conventional notions of sexuality and gender, do not correspond with their biological sex.

**Homophobia**

A fear or hatred of homosexuality, especially of others but also in oneself.

**Heterosexism**

An overt or implied bias against homosexuality, stemming from the belief that heterosexuality is superior or the only acceptable sexual expression.

**Biological Sex**

This can be considered as our "packaging" and is determined by our chromosomes, our hormones, and our internal and external genitalia. Some people can be defined as intersexuals born with biological aspects of both sexes to varying degrees. So, in actuality, there are more than two sexes.

**Gender Identity**

This is the individual's innermost concept of self as "male" or "female"—what we perceive and call ourselves. Individuals are conscious of this generally between the ages of 18 months and 3 years (though many researchers report it may be formed before birth). Most people develop a gender identity aligning with their biological sex. For some, however, their gender identity is different from their biological sex. We sometimes call these people transsexuals, some of whom hormonally and/or surgically change their sex to more fully match their gender identity.

**After students finish reading the definitions, ask them the following questions:**

- How are these definitions different from the use of some of these same words when you recorded them in the first part of this activity?
- When is it appropriate to use these words?
- What are some examples of inappropriate uses of these words?

Tell students that all these words will be used during this and other activities, so they should understand their meanings. They should also be sensitive to **HOW** these words are used. None of the words in this exercise should carry a negative connotation or stigma, although when students recorded these words in Part 1 of the activity, they may have been used as insults or put-downs.

Set ground rules about using these words in your classroom, paying attention to why it is important to be sensitive to language as well as to consequences for students who do not respect the ground rules.

#### **Part 4: Generalizing to the larger society**

Share with students the findings in Handout 3: *GLSEN'S National School Climate Survey*. This handout also includes a shorter, one-page summary of the survey at the end.

As a class, discuss the following questions based on the findings of the national survey:

- How does your school compare to the national data?
- Why is homophobia so pervasive in schools?
- How does homophobia affect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students?
- How does homophobia affect straight students?

To answer the next question, ask students to read the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**. This document, written in 1948, is still the most commonly accepted statement of all people's fundamental human rights, which they enjoy by virtue of being a person, not because they are granted by a government as is the case with constitutional rights.

- In what ways do the examples of homophobia you documented and which are described in GLSEN's survey constitute violations of human rights—both of sexual minority and straight students?

Ask students to refer to specific articles in the UDHR in their answer. Possible articles describing rights which are violated regularly in schools include:

- Article 1: The right to be considered free and equal to all other humans
- Article 3: The right to live, to be free, to feel secure
- Article 12: The right to privacy
- Article 18: The right to freedom of thought
- Article 19: The right to freedom of expression
- Article 20: The right to assemble
- Article 26: The right to an education
- Article 29: The duty to respect the rights of others.

#### **Part 5: Interrupting human rights violations in school**

Because the treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in schools, in some cases, constitutes human rights violations, it is important to interrupt such treatment. That means not participating in such violations and doing what we can to stop others when we see them perpetrating such acts. All students, not just sexual minority youth, have a responsibility to protect the human rights of all students in schools. For straight students and teachers, this means acting as an ally, someone willing to speak up for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. Taking a stand is not easy, however. In some cases, students might fear for their own safety. In other cases, allies might fear being labeled gay or lesbian.

As a class, discuss some of the examples of homophobia recorded in Part 1 and how students and teachers, individually and collectively, can interrupt human rights violations. As you brainstorm, think not only about how to react to violations as they occur or after the fact, but also about how to create a climate in school that supports respect for and celebration of students' human rights. Discuss the relative risks of the actions generated by students, given the climate of their school.

Using the matrix below, drawn on the chalkboard or on butcher paper, may help the class organize its thoughts. Included are possible responses that students may generate.

|                                            | Individual responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Collective responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Reacting to human rights violations</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letting others know that you are offended by their homophobic actions</li> <li>• Challenging name calling and other violations</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizing petition drives and assemblies in response to incidents of homophobia</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Preventing human rights violations</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not using homophobic language</li> <li>• Not making heterosexist assumptions</li> <li>• Learning about sexual minorities</li> <li>• Supporting students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender</li> <li>• Coming out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starting a gay-straight alliance</li> <li>• Asking for inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues in the curriculum</li> <li>• Calling for faculty training on issues of sexual minority youth</li> <li>• Working for policies to protect sexual minorities at school</li> </ul> |

Stress the importance of being proactive. Point out that students and teachers have only a limited number of responses AFTER human rights violations of sexual minority youth occur. When students and teachers act BEFORE, they have a wider range of options that can prevent violations from occurring in the first place.



## ACTIVITY 1: HANDOUT 1

### WORDS AROUND US

Language plays a central role – both positive and negative – in shaping how we think about ourselves, others, and the world in general. Your class is going to begin an examination of the language used in school connected to lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender persons. During the next week, record every example of such language you hear. In some cases, language may be used to describe a particular person, while in other cases, it may be used to describe either a real or abstract group of people. In still other cases, the language may be used to describe something that has no connection to people (e.g., a student may hear a classmate describe a homework assignment as “gay”).

It may not be practical (or safe) for you to record information in the presence of the people using it. In such instances, record the information later. At the minimum, you should record information on a daily basis. Waiting until the end of the week will probably lead to forgetting many particular incidents.

Record the exact words you see, hear, or use. You may be offended or have very strong feelings about the words you see or hear. You should make note of your personal response in the last column labeled “Reaction”. Under the heading “Who used,” do NOT write anyone’s name. Instead record whether the language was used by a student, teacher, staff person, or administrator. Under the heading “Where” you should record in what part of the school the language was used (e.g., hallway, playground, locker room, classroom, cafeteria).

In addition to describing your personal reaction in a phrase or two under the heading “Reaction,” you should also record the intention of the speaker using the language under the heading “Intention.” Was the language used to describe without placing value on lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender persons? Was it used to hurt, demonize, or portray people in a negative light? Was it used to praise, celebrate, or portray people in a positive light? Was the language used seriously, mockingly, or comically? If you are uncertain or have contradictory ideas about how the language was used, note that here.

Use additional sheets to record your data if necessary.

# ACTIVITY 1: HANDOUT 1

## WORDS AROUND US

| Date | Word/phrase | Who used | Where | Intention | Reaction |
|------|-------------|----------|-------|-----------|----------|
|      |             |          |       |           |          |
|      |             |          |       |           |          |
|      |             |          |       |           |          |
|      |             |          |       |           |          |
|      |             |          |       |           |          |
|      |             |          |       |           |          |

## ACTIVITY 1: HANDOUT 2

### DEFINING TERMS

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gay                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Lesbian                                                                                                                                             | Queer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Bisexual                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Transgender                                                                                                                                         | Homophobia                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Heterosexism                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Biological Sex                                                                                                                                      | Gender Identity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| A person attracted physically and emotionally to some persons of the same sex. Usually used to describe men.                                                                                                                                                          | A woman attracted physically and emotionally to some other women                                                                                    | An individual's innermost concept of self as "male" or "female". Most people develop a gender identity aligning with their biological sex. For some, however, their gender identity is different from their biological sex. We sometimes call these people <i>transsexuals</i> , some of whom hormonally and/or surgically change their sex to more fully match their gender identity. |
| Differing from the heterosexual norm. Although sometimes used in a derogatory sense, the word is also used without any negative intentions in colloquial and academic settings as an umbrella term to describe gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender persons. | A person attracted physically and emotionally to some men and some women.                                                                           | A broad term used to describe individuals whose gender identity and expression, when measured against conventional notions of sexuality and gender, do not correspond with their genetic sex.                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| A fear or hatred of homosexuality, especially of others but also in oneself.                                                                                                                                                                                          | An overt or implied bias against homosexuality, stemming from the belief that heterosexuality is superior or the only acceptable sexual expression. | This can be considered as our "packaging" and is determined by our chromosomes, our hormones, and our internal and external genitalia. Some people can be defined as intersexuals born with biological aspects of both sexes to varying degrees. So, in actuality, there are more than two sexes.                                                                                      |

## ACTIVITY 1: HANDOUT 3

# GLSEN'S NATIONAL SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY:

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students and Their Experiences in School

### The Survey

The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) recently completed a national survey of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students affiliated with local youth service organizations (participating organizations of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition) in communities around the United States. The survey was distributed to the staff or volunteers of the youth service organizations, who in turn distributed it to their constituents. In this survey, students were asked about their school climate: overall comfort level, frequency of homophobic remarks heard, experiences with verbal, physical and sexual harassment, and experience with physical violence related to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

A total of 496 lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender youth from 32 states completed the survey fully. (Participants who did not indicate their sexual orientation or who chose to write in "Other" were included in the analysis with the LGBT youth. It is possible that some of these students were not comfortable identifying themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender on the survey or that they were currently questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity.)

### The Findings

#### I. Homophobic Remarks in School

Youth were asked whether they had heard words such as "faggot," "dyke," or "queer" in their school and, if so, who made these remarks (student, faculty/staff or both). Youth were also asked how frequently they had heard homophobic remarks in their classes, the hallways, the bathroom or locker room, on school buses or on the field or in the gym: never, rarely, sometimes or frequently.

- Over 90% (91.4%) of LGBT youth reported that they sometimes or frequently hear homophobic remarks in their school (words such as "faggot," "dyke," or "queer"). Almost all of the youth reported hearing these remarks from other students (99.4%).
- Over one-third of the youth reported hearing homophobic remarks from faculty or school staff (36.6%). Youth most frequently heard homophobic remarks in school hallways or in classrooms.
  - Hallways: 89.8% of youth reported "frequently" or "sometimes"
  - Classrooms: 85.8% of youth reported "frequently" or "sometimes"

- However, almost 75% of youth also reported hearing homophobic remarks in school bathrooms, in the school gym, and on school buses.
- Over one-third of youth (39.2%) reported that no one ever intervened in these circumstances. Almost half of the youth (46.5%) reported that someone intervened only some of the time. Other students were more often reported to intervene than were faculty (82.4% reported intervention by students compared to 66.5% reported for faculty).

## II. Harassment

Youth were asked how frequently they had been verbally, physically, or sexually harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender identity: daily, weekly, or monthly.

The majority of youth reported experiencing some form of harassment or violence (69%).

- 61.1% reported experiences of verbal harassment.
- 46.5% reported experiences of sexual harassment (having suggestive comments made, being touched inappropriately, etc.).
- 27.6% reported experiences of physical harassment (being shoved, pushed, etc.).
- 13.7% reported experiences of physical assault (being beaten, punched, kicked, etc.).

Of those students who reported verbal harassment, almost half said that they experienced it daily (45.9%).

## III. Overall Comfort in School

Nearly half (2 out of 5) of the youth did not feel safe in their school because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (41.7%). Because perceptions of safety can be subjective, we wanted to examine whether there were significant differences between those students who felt safe in their school and those who did not feel safe. Indeed, fewer of the youth who felt safe in their schools reported harassment and assault due to their sexual orientation or gender identity than did the youth who reported feeling unsafe in their schools. It is important to note, however, that even though their reports of harassment and assault were lower, they were not insignificant: the majority of the youth who felt safe in their schools still reported hearing homophobic remarks sometimes or frequently (86.7%) despite reporting feeling safe, 46% reported verbal harassment; 36.4% reported sexual harassment; 12.1% reported physical harassment; and 6.1% reported physical assault in their school. Over a third of the youth did not feel comfortable speaking to school staff about LGBT issues (38.2%).



#### IV. Demographic Differences

Because GLSEN is aware of the possible relationships among homophobia, sexism, and racism, questions were included to discern whether there were demographic differences regarding the harassment or violence of the LGBT youth in our survey.

For the most part, the experiences of LGBT youth were similar across racial/ethnic and gender groups. Transgender youth reported homophobic remarks less frequently than male or female youth:

- 73.7% of transgender youth reported "sometimes" or "frequently."
- 91.7% of male youth reported "sometimes" or "frequently."
- 93.6% of female youth reported "sometimes" or "frequently."

White and Asian/Pacific Islander students reported hearing more homophobic remarks in school than African American/Black or Latino/a students did. There were no significant differences, however, among non-white ethnic or racial groups:

- 94% of white youth reported "sometimes" or "frequently."
- 93.8% of Asian/Pacific Islander youth reported "sometimes" or "frequently."
- 85.7% of African American/Black youth reported "sometimes" or "frequently."
- 80.6% of Latino/a youth reported "sometimes" or "frequently."

The School Climate Survey specifically assessed bias regarding sexual orientation and gender identity; it did not assess bias regarding race or ethnicity. It is possible that harassment or violence due to race or ethnicity may be more salient for LGBT youth of color than harassment or violence due to sexual orientation or gender identity. Also, it is important to note that the majority of youth in the survey were white. It is possible that with a larger representation of racial/ethnic minority youth, other meaningful differences could emerge.

Latino/a and white youth were likelier to report being physically harassed (being shoved, pushed, etc.) at their schools because of their sexual orientation or gender identity:

- 40.0% of Latino/a youth
- 29.6% of white youth
- 18.8% of Asian/Pacific Islander youth
- 13.4% of African American/Black youth

## V. Regional Differences

Youth from Midwestern states reported homophobic remarks more frequently than youth from all other regions of the country:

- 98.3% of youth from the Midwest reported "sometimes" or "frequently."
- 92.3% of youth from the South reported "sometimes" or "frequently."
- 89.4% of youth from the West reported "sometimes" or "frequently."
- 86.4% of youth from the Northeast reported "sometimes" or "frequently."

More youth from Midwestern states reported being physical harassed (being shoved, pushed, etc.) at their schools because of their sexual orientation or gender identity than youth from all other regions:

- 40.4% of youth from the Midwest
- 30.2% of youth from the West
- 21.8% of youth from the Northeast
- 17.1% of youth from the South

More youth from the Midwestern states reported being uncomfortable talking to any school staff member about LGBT issues:

- 47.7% of youth from the Midwest
- 41.7% of youth from the Northeast
- 31.6% of youth from the South
- 29.4% of youth from the West

## **Summary**

### **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students and Their Experiences in School\***

#### **I. Homophobic Remarks in School**

- 91.4% of LGBT youth reported that they sometimes or frequently hear homophobic remarks in their school (words such as "faggot," "dyke," or "queer").
- 99.4% of the youth reported hearing these remarks from other students.
- 36.6% of the youth reported hearing homophobic remarks from faculty or school staff.
- Youth most frequently heard homophobic remarks in school hallways or in classrooms.
- Hallways: 89.8% of youth reported "frequently" or "sometimes"
- Classrooms: 85.8% of youth reported "frequently" or "sometimes"
- 75% of youth also reported hearing homophobic remarks in school bathrooms, in the school gym and on school buses.
- 39.2% of youth reported that no one ever intervened in these circumstances.
- 46.5% of the youth reported that someone intervened only some of the time.
- Other students were more often reported to intervene than were faculty (82.4% reported intervention by students compared to 66.5% reported for faculty).

#### **II. Harassment**

- 69% of youth reported experiencing some form of harassment or violence.
- 61.1% reported experiences of verbal harassment.
- 46.5% reported experiences of sexual harassment (having suggestive comments made, being touched inappropriately, etc.).
- 27.6% reported experiences of physical harassment (being shoved, pushed, etc.).
- 13.7% reported experiences of physical assault (being beaten, punched, kicked, etc.).
- Of those students who reported verbal harassment, 45.9% said that they experienced it daily.

#### **III. Overall Comfort in School**

- 41.7% of the youth did not feel safe in their school because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.
- 86.7% of the youth who felt safe in their schools still reported hearing homophobic remarks sometimes or frequently.
- Despite reporting feeling safe, 46% reported verbal harassment; 36.4% reported sexual harassment; 12.1% reported physical harassment; and 6.1% reported physical assault in their school.
- 38.2% of the youth did not feel comfortable speaking to school staff about LGBT issues.

\* From: The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), 1999. Consult GLSEN's website ([www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)) for a complete transcript of the survey and for up-to-date studies.

## ACTIVITY 2

# ARE GAY RIGHTS "SPECIAL?"

## What Does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Say?

### OVERVIEW

In this activity, students collect newspaper articles about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights. These rights may be denied, demanded, or respected. After discussing the articles, students catalog the variety of rights and compare this list with the rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

### OBJECTIVES

- To describe current lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights that have been denied, demanded, or respected
- To compare the rights sought by sexual minorities to the rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

|                       |                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Age Level:</b>     | High school to adult                                                                                                       |
| <b>Time:</b>          | About 60 minutes with a week's worth of preparation                                                                        |
| <b>Materials:</b>     | Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) official or kids' version, Amnesty International's animated video of the UDHR |
| <b>Subject Areas:</b> | Social studies                                                                                                             |

### PROCEDURE

#### Part 1: Collecting articles on LGBT rights

**Important:** *This part must begin one week before the rest of the activity.*

About one week before the activity, ask students to collect articles from newspapers, news-magazines, and websites about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights. Articles about these rights might describe how they are denied, demanded, or respected. These articles can describe any part of the world, though most will probably focus on the United States.

The topics of articles might include:

- Local or state initiatives for or against gay rights
- Child custody or adoption issues
- Same-sex marriage
- Gay-straight alliances or curricular issues in schools
- Refugee or immigration issues
- Sexual minorities in the military, ministry, or some other job
- Out or outed celebrities
- Gay bashing or hate crimes
- Public opinion polls
- Reports on gay pride parades or gay pride month
- Book, TV, or movie reviews

## **Part 2: Making a human rights analysis**

On the day of this activity, ask students to describe their articles and the rights that were denied, demanded, or respected. Possible rights might include:

- Right to privacy
- Right to form a family
- Right to employment
- Right to housing
- Right to an identity
- Right to be equal before the law
- Right to medical care and information
- Right to an education
- Right to free speech
- Right to assembly
- Right to be free of cruel and unusual punishment
- Right to a fair trial

Keep track of this list on the chalkboard or butcher paper.

If students are having a difficult time finding articles or come to class unprepared, ask them to describe the rights denied, demanded, or respected in the following situations:

- A mother loses custody of her child in a divorce because she is a lesbian



- State legislators discuss amending state law to define marriage as only between a man and a woman
- A student is kicked out of the Naval Academy because he admits he is gay
- Two male sports celebrities write a book about their relationship
- A state review committee demands that health textbook publishers delete any references to homosexuality
- A woman kisses another woman on a network television show
- A man is "bashed" on a Saturday night by a group of teenagers shouting "faggot"
- A teacher refuses to allow students to use words like "fag" or "homo" in her classroom
- The police in an Eastern European nation keep a file of men and women they suspect are gay and lesbian
- The military in a Latin American nation torture a man because he is gay
- The city grants a permit to hold a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender parade
- Amnesty International calls for state governments to drop laws that criminalize homosexuality
- A lesbian is fired when her boss learns about her sexual orientation
- Students at a local high school form a gay-straight alliance

After students have completed their list of rights denied, demanded, or respected, assign small groups of students to look for those rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)—either the official version or the kids' version. As an alternative, show Amnesty International's animated video about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The video runs about 20 minutes. Information about obtaining a copy of the video is available by visiting [www.amnesty-usa.org](http://www.amnesty-usa.org).

Each group should write down whether those rights are guaranteed in the UDHR or whether there is any language that would preclude sexual minorities from those rights. Groups should report their findings to the rest of the class.

A follow up discussion should consider these questions:

- What lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights that were respected are guaranteed in the UDHR?
- What lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights that were demanded are guaranteed in the UDHR?
- What lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights that were denied are guaranteed in the UDHR?
- Were any of the demanded, denied, or respected rights NOT mentioned in the UDHR?
- Using the UDHR as a reference, how would you respond to someone who says, "Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people are asking for special rights"?



*Within the lesbian community I am Black, and within the Black community I am a lesbian. Any attack against Black people is a lesbian and gay issue, because I and thousands of other Black women are part of the lesbian community. Any attack against lesbians and gays is a Black issue because thousands of lesbians and gay men are Black. There is no hierarchy of oppression.*

Audre Lorde

"There Is No Hierarchy of Oppression"

*Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*, Vol. 14, No. 3 & 4, p. 9

### ACTIVITY 3

## WHAT IF THINGS WERE DIFFERENT?

### Charting the effects of change

#### OVERVIEW

In this activity, students consider how high school age youth are making a difference for the rights of sexual minorities in school. They also consider how change has a ripple effect to understand how their actions have significance beyond their immediate effect.

#### OBJECTIVES

- To understand how people in the past and present are working to create a society that includes the human rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people
- To appreciate the importance of becoming involved in positive change

**Age Level:** High school to adult

**Time:** About 2 hours

**Materials:**

- *Out of the Past* video
- *Out of the Past: Teachers' Guide*
- Handout 1: *Kelli Peterson and the Fight to Establish a Gay-Straight Alliance*
- Handout 2: *The Effects Wheel*

**Subject Areas:** Social studies, English

#### PROCEDURE

##### Part 1: Out of the Past

This section of the activity draws on the video *Out of the Past* (available from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network), and in particular the segments featuring Kelli Peterson, a student in Salt Lake City who sought to establish a gay-straight alliance at her high school. For more background on Kelli's story, see Handout 1: *Kelli Peterson and the Fight to Establish a Gay-Straight Alliance*.

After showing the video, you may want to focus on particular segments using the *Out of the Past: Teachers' Guide* accompanying the video. The film uses the stories of individuals spanning nearly 400 years of U.S. history to illustrate how gays and lesbians have been part of the past and the role they have played in making history.

## Part 2: Charting the Dynamic Process of Change

*Out of the Past* will help students understand how history is made, in terms of the individuals responsible for actions in the past and in terms of those in the present who preserve and interpret stories from the past. To help students see that one change can have significance beyond that immediate action, use Handout 2: *The Effects Wheel* as a means of scaffolding this understanding. The effects wheel can be reproduced as an overhead transparency or copied on the chalkboard or butcher paper.

To demonstrate how the effects wheel works, complete one section of the wheel. In the center of the sample effects wheel, write: *Lesbians and gays speak out about their lives*. Ask students to speculate about the possible effects of such a change, referring to the segment of the *Out of the Past* video featuring Barbara Gittings. Write one of the ideas generated by the class in the first ring surrounding the center. Students might suggest that lesbian and gay individuals will feel "whole," as Gittings describes. Or they may suggest that a group like the American Psychiatric Association will reconsider its classification of homosexuality as a sickness based on contradictory evidence from the now-public lives of gay people. Then ask the students to consider the repercussions that this primary effect might have. Write one or two of their ideas in the next concentric circle of secondary effects. One possibility might be greater acceptance of lesbians and gays in general society. Another possibility might be rewriting certain legislation that criminalizes homosexuality. Another possibility might be to see homophobia, not homosexuality, as a social problem. Write one or two more of the students' ideas in the outermost circle. These are the secondary effects of a social change.

Give students an opportunity to ask any clarifying questions about how the effects wheel works. Once you are sure they understand how to complete the effects wheel, divide the class into pairs and ask them to complete an effects wheel for one of the changes below. The first five changes describe changes in schooling at the local school level. The second five changes describe changes at the international level. You may want to assign the same change to more than one pair so they can compare their predictions about possible effects stemming from that change.

1. What if a school without a gay-straight alliance formed one?
2. What if the history, literature, issues, and accomplishments of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons were included in the curriculum?
3. What if a state without a LGBT students' bill of rights enacted such legislation?
4. What if no one were afraid to be an ally to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students?
5. What if the most popular person in your school "came out?"
6. What if homosexuality were not a crime in Romania?
7. What if the government of Zambia did not persecute lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender citizens?

8. What if the government of Canada recognized same-sex partnerships for all legal purposes?
9. What if granting equal rights to sexual minorities were a requirement for joining international organizations, such as the European Union?
10. What if police no longer kept "pink lists" of persons they suspect or know to be gay or lesbian?

Each group should complete its effects wheel as a poster. After the groups complete their posters, display them around the room and allow students to take a "gallery walk." At least one member of each group should stay by his or her group's poster to answer any questions that other students may have as they view the effects wheels. Students in each group should take turns fulfilling this responsibility so every student has a chance to view the works of other groups.

After students have viewed other groups' posters, ask the following questions to synthesize what the students learned:

- How difficult or easy was it to identify primary, secondary, and tertiary effects of change?
- How, if at all, were the consequences of change at the local school level similar to the consequences of change at the international level?
- Given what you saw as the effects of local and international change, why is it important to work for change at both levels?



### ACTIVITY 3: HANDOUT 1

## KELLI PETERSON AND THE FIGHT TO ESTABLISH A GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCE

The following background information is taken from *Out of the Past: Teachers Guide*, published by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network. More information about *Out of the Past* is available from the GLSEN Bookstore (800/247-6553 or <http://www.atlasbooks.com/glsen/>).

There are currently more than 700 Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) and other gay-related student groups in secondary schools from Alaska to New Hampshire that have equal status with other student clubs in their schools. A number of other groups have a kind of "second-class citizenship" in schools where the administration won't allow them to meet at the same time as other clubs, for example, or to make announcements over the public address system or post flyers on school bulletin boards. GSAs attempt to create safer environments for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth in high schools and provide support for those facing harassment. Ultimately, the hope is that all youth will have equal access to education free from harassment or intimidation.

In the fall of 1995, Kelli Peterson and a friend were talking about the difficulties they faced as LGBT teenagers at East High School in Salt Lake City, Utah. Wouldn't it be great, they thought as they compared stories, to have a place where we could meet regularly and talk about this stuff? A place where we could feel safe and just be ourselves with our friends? They asked a teacher to serve as the faculty adviser for a GSA and sought a classroom space for regular meetings. By December, their request had made the pages of the local papers. Ultimately, their attempt to create a safe space launched a state-wide controversy and catapulted Peterson into the national spotlight, as she and her friends fought for the right to meet on campus like any other student group.

At East High School, school officials balked at Peterson's initial request. Some parents, teachers, and administrators were concerned that allowing a GSA would constitute an "endorsement" of homosexuality and would be a forum for "recruiting" other students to become LGBT. The school administration turned to the state attorney general for a legal opinion. He determined that the school was legally required to allow the students to meet under the terms of the Federal Equal Access Act. The Equal Access Act, passed in 1984, applies to any public secondary school that receives federal money. If such a school allows even one

"non-curricular" student club to meet, the school cannot then deny any other student groups equal status on the basis of the topic on which the group focuses. "Non-curricular" clubs are groups that do not relate directly to the courses offered by the school; a Spanish club is curricular, but Students Against Drunk Driving or Young Republicans or Democrats are non-curricular.

The School Board and the State Legislature met to discuss options available to them in order to keep Peterson's group from meeting. At the time, Peterson was baffled by the response to her request: "What has made it a big deal is the senators have blown this out of proportion," she said. "All we are asking for is one hour a week in a classroom and a faculty sponsor." Ultimately, the school board banned all "non-curricular" clubs at local public high schools and then began to redefine selected clubs as "curricular," in order to allow them to meet. As a result, the East High Gay/Straight Alliance rented space at the school after school hours but had no official standing at the school. They were not allowed to announce meetings or post notices of their activities, and many students at East High had no idea that the group existed.

In March 1998, student members of two high schools sued the Salt Lake City School Board for the right to express their views in both non-curricular and curricular clubs. With regard to the non-curricular club setting, the trial judge found that the school district had violated the students' rights only for the school year in which the suit was filed, but not subsequently because the trial judge believed the clubs allowed in the later years were all curricular. In the curricular club setting, the students sought the right to express pro-gay viewpoints, such as having a same-sex marriage debate in the Debate Club. On the eve of the trial, the school district announced to the court a new policy guaranteeing the right to "freely express pro-gay viewpoints" and highlighted a new state rule subjecting teachers to disciplinary proceedings if they engage in anti-gay discrimination.

In December, 1999, based on the district's guarantees, the trial judge dismissed the remainder of the action because the students had exacted from the district the relief sought in the lawsuit for free expression rights in curricular clubs. The judge rejected the notion that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues are always inappropriate in schools, saying, "It would be naïve at best to assume that expression of such views necessarily would involve the advocacy or even the description of particular sexual behavior or practices. Concerns about discussion of human sexuality in the public school setting have little bearing upon a discussion of the role of gay and lesbian persons in the Holocaust, or the orientation of various historical or literary figures and its impact upon their lives and work." Though the judge's ruling upholds the prohibition of all non-curricular clubs—including Kelli Peterson's GSA as originally conceived—it is a critical decision because it opens the door to discussions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues in Utah schools for the first time. As ideas about curricula and appropriate

classroom discussion expand, it is inevitable that definitions of "curricular clubs" will evolve as well.

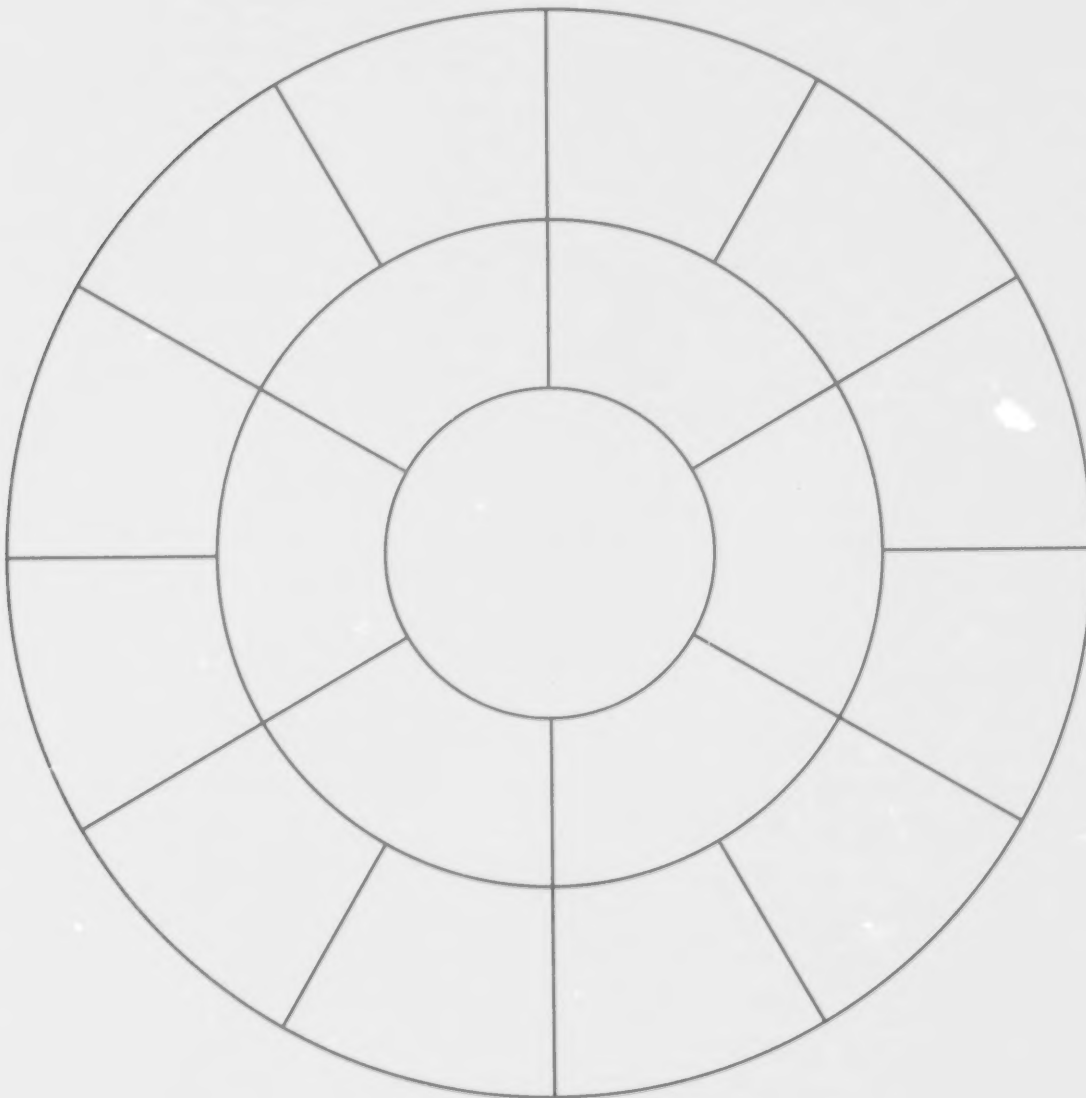
POSTSCRIPT: Only days after the Utah decision, school board members in Orange County, California voted 7-0 to ban a GSA from El Modena High School claiming that the group's subject matter is curricular and therefore not protected by the Equal Access Act, which protects only non-curricular clubs. The school board stated that the club's purpose is sexually related and that the board has a duty to control how sex education is taught and by whom. Some heralded the decision as responsible and a protection of parental rights. Students argued that the goal of the club is to promote tolerance, not sexuality, and to serve as a place where gay and straight students can socialize and do service projects without fear of harassment. Supporters of the club further point out that, though the Gay-Straight Alliance has been categorized as a curricular club, El Modena High School does not reflect lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender issues in any of its present curricula or policies. Both the Salt Lake City and Orange County decisions highlight important legal and moral issues. Since the debate over GSAs and LGBT inclusion is still so new, it will likely be some time before a definitive legal precedent is set. In the meantime, each school community must rely on the strength of its mission and sense of justice in doing the right thing for its students.

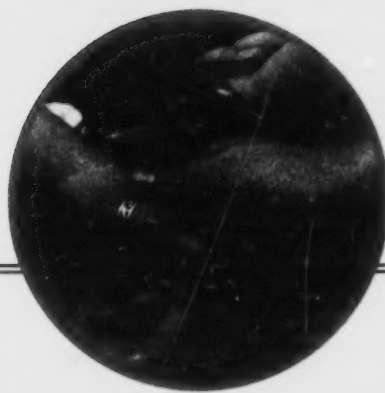
Source: GLSEN *Out of the Past: Teachers' Guide*

### ACTIVITY 3: HANDOUT 2

## THE EFFECTS WHEEL

One change can have significance beyond that immediate action. Using the effects wheel below as a guide, you will work with a partner to illustrate how taking one action on behalf of justice and equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons can affect the whole of society as one change leads to others. Your teacher will ask you to write one change in the middle of the wheel. In the ring surrounding the middle, you will write possible effects of that change. In the outermost ring, you will write possible effects of changes in the middle ring. The intent of this exercise is for you to see that the actions you take really do make a difference in the short term and in the long run.





*I am asking teachers to apply our knowledge about  
and experience with curricular revision to the issue of  
sexual identities. I want to see teachers move beyond  
merely confronting homophobia in students' language.  
I want us to confront compulsory heterosexuality in  
the curriculum, and in our own language.*

Elissa Raffa  
"Curricular Revision and Lesbian Reality"  
National Women's Studies Association, 1990



## ACTIVITY 4

# IS IT A CRIME TO BE GAY?

### Debating Tolerance in a New Democracy: A Role Play

#### OVERVIEW

In this activity, students stage a parliamentary committee hearing in the newly independent Eastern European country of Boldovistan. Role playing characters with differing attitudes towards homosexuality, students testify on legislation to abolish laws making consensual homosexual relations between adults a crime. In the process, they compare the differing points of view, attempt to reach a decision on whether government should regulate persons' private lives, and analyze the consequences of different decisions.

#### OBJECTIVES

- To compare different attitudes towards gays and lesbians
- To develop and defend an opinion about legalizing consensual homosexual relations between adults
- To analyze the consequences of making homosexual relations a crime

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Age Level:</b>     | High school to adult                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Time:</b>          | About 90 minutes                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Materials:</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Handout 1: <i>The Situation in Boldovistan Today</i></li><li>• Handout 2: <i>Parliamentary Hearing Role Cards</i></li></ul> |
| <b>Subject Areas:</b> | Social studies                                                                                                                                                      |

#### PROCEDURE

Ask students to read Handout 1: *The Situation in Boldovistan Today* describing the activity and setting the scene. As presented here, the situation in the fictional country of Boldovistan resembles present-day Romania.

Assign three students to each of the groups who will be offering testimony. Assign six students to sit on the parliamentary committee.

Once the groups are organized and the committee is chosen, hand out the role cards.

Allow approximately 15 minutes for the groups to prepare their testimony. Students role playing committee members should use the time to develop a list of questions to ask each of the parties testifying. They should also look at all the role cards to get a sense of who will testify and the concerns they will present.

Each group should draw lots to determine the order of testimony. After a group makes its presentation, it should then answer questions from the committee.

After hearing testimony, the committee should draw up its recommendations to the government, along with reasons for those recommendations. The committee can work in "fishbowl" fashion, debating what recommendations to make in front of the rest of the class.

After the committee reports its recommendations, debrief the activity with the following questions:

- With which group's testimony did you most agree? Why?
- With which group's testimony did you least agree? Why?
- What do you think will be the consequences of the committee's recommendations?
- What other recommendations could the committee have made?
- What might have been the consequences of those recommendations?
- What decision do you think the committee should make? Why?
- Did any of the arguments presented change your own opinion in any way?

## ACTIVITY 4: HANDOUT 1

# THE SITUATION IN BOLDOVISTAN TODAY

### **Boldovistan Today**

You are living in the newly democratic nation of Boldovistan. After decades of totalitarian government, the country seeks to join the community of European democracies. In general, the European democracies have more tolerant laws towards homosexuality than Boldovistan, and they are reluctant to consider closer economic, political, and cultural ties with Boldovistan until it decriminalizes homosexuality.

The government has appointed committees to review existing legislation. One of the most controversial laws under review is Section 28 of the Penal Code, which condemns people of majority age found guilty of consensual homosexual acts to five years' imprisonment. Section 28 has been used for many years against adults having consensual same-sex relationships. Often the testimony of one person is enough to convict. In some cases, Section 28 was used to arrest and discredit people who were not gay or lesbian. Section 28 has been used within the last year to arrest several persons who are currently awaiting trial.

A parliamentary committee has requested testimony from various persons to determine if Section 28 should be changed, and if so, what the consequences might be. The committee of six politicians, including center, left, and right parties, will listen to representatives of:

- Local and national police
- Civil liberties association
- Conservative religious leaders
- Liberal religious leaders
- Pro-family lobby
- Education and social services representatives
- Health authorities
- Lesbian and gay rights groups
- Amnesty International

## LESSON 4: HANDOUT 2

# PARLIAMENTARY HEARING ROLE CARDS

### Role Card 1

#### **LOCAL AND NATIONAL POLICE**

You represent the police force in Boldovistan. A survey of police revealed the following opinions to be commonly held:

Most police do not like homosexuals or homosexuality.

Homosexual acts between consenting adults are a victimless crime, meaning no one is hurt as a result.

Given the increasing rate of violent crime, resources that are used to arrest gays and lesbians could be better used elsewhere.

Decriminalization will lead to an increase in pornography and prostitution.

Police attitudes towards homosexuals would probably remain hostile even if Section 28 were abolished.

### Role Card 2

#### **CIVIL LIBERTIES GROUP**

You represent the newly established Boldovistanian Commission for Civil Liberties. You have consulted with civil liberties organizations in other countries and believe that:

Since Boldovistan is now a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, sexual activity between consenting adults is a private matter and not appropriate for state legislation.

Boldovistan must respect the European Court of Human Rights which has ruled that it is illegal for nations to criminalize homosexual relations between consenting adults.

Since international statistics indicate that approximately 10 percent of the population are lesbian or gay, they should have the right to expect complete equality under Boldovistanian law as do all other minorities.

### Role Card 3

#### **CONSERVATIVE RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

You are the leaders of the conservative element of the major religion in Boldovistan, claiming to represent about 34 percent of the population. You believe:

Homosexuality is inherently evil and unnatural.

AIDS is a divine punishment.

The state should strengthen traditional morality.

Your followers can be mobilized to pressure lawmakers against repealing Section 28.

### Role Card 4

#### **LIBERAL RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

You are the leaders of the liberal element of the major religion in Boldovistan, representing about 25 percent of the population. Under the previous regime your group was often seen as a place of sanctuary by lesbians and gays and other oppressed minorities. The most widely held views among your followers are that:

Homosexuals should receive support rather than punishment.

The laws against homosexuality should be liberalized.

State recognition of lesbian and gay marriages and rights to parenthood are "going too far."

#### **Role Card 5**

### **FAMILY SANCTITY COUNCIL**

You are very small in membership but very vocal, with some support in the new government and the media. You believe that:

The traditional family unit is absolutely sacred and the only place to bring up children.

You will strongly resist attempts by the government to broaden the definition of "family."

No child will be safe from influence and abuse if lesbians and gays are allowed to be parents, teachers, or youth workers.

#### **Role Card 6**

### **EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY**

You are members of the legal body which administers education and welfare law in Boldovistan. From your experience, you believe that:

Children suffer no harm from having a lesbian or gay parent.

The current high rate of teenage suicide among lesbians and gays could be prevented if homosexuality were decriminalized.

#### **Role Card 7**

### **HEALTH AUTHORITIES**

You are representatives of the Boldovistanian Health Authority. Your main concerns are that health care and health education should reach as much of the population as possible. You maintain that:

It is impossible to teach effectively about safe sex and HIV prevention without acknowledging homosexuality.

More people would be tested for HIV infection if gay and lesbian relationships were legal.

#### **Role Card 8**

### **LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS GROUP**

You are members of the recently-formed Boldovistanian Lesbian and Gay Rights Group. You have gathered international support for your campaign for equal status and rights for lesbians and gays. The main points of your campaign are:

Gays and lesbians should be full citizens with equal protection under the law.

Laws against homosexual relations should be abolished.

Evidence does not support the argument that children suffer negatively from having lesbian or gay parents; on the contrary, most child abusers are heterosexual men. You therefore demand full parental rights for lesbians and gays.

Decriminalization of homosexuality is not linked to an increase in prostitution and pornography, especially since the overwhelming majority of both pornography and prostitution is heterosexual.



### **Role Card 9**

#### **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

Amnesty International is an international, non-partisan human rights organization. It maintains that it is a violation of human rights to imprison people on the grounds of their homosexuality. You are therefore demanding that:

Section 28 be repealed and homosexuality be decriminalized in Boldovistan.

All persons imprisoned because of consensual relations with a partner of the same-sex be released immediately.

### **Role Card 10**

#### **PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE MEMBER**

You feel conflicted about the issue before you. On the one hand, you want Boldovistan to become integrated into the rest of Europe. On the other hand, you don't like changing national law to suit standards of other nations. You are trying to be as open-minded as possible to the wide-ranging and sometimes contradictory testimony before you. You therefore are asking questions about:

Why people testifying before the committee believe what they do.

What people testifying see as the outcomes, short term and long term, of change.

How people testifying would respond to the statements made by others testifying before them.



## ACTIVITY 5

# WHAT MUST BE DONE TO ACHIEVE EQUALITY?

### Evaluating different approaches

#### OVERVIEW

By evaluating various statements about what must be done to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, students consider the responsibility they have to end discrimination. Students also explore the relative importance of changing legislation, changing attitudes, and taking action in order to achieve equality.

#### OBJECTIVES

- To analyze responsibility for ending discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons
- To compare the relative importance of different tactics for achieving equality

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Age Level:</b>     | High school to adult                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Time:</b>          | About 60 minutes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Materials:</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• butcher paper</li><li>• Handout 1: <i>Changing Legislation to Achieve Equality</i></li><li>• Handout 2: <i>Changing Attitudes to Achieve Equality</i></li><li>• Handout 3: <i>Taking Action to Achieve Equality</i></li></ul> |
| <b>Subject Areas:</b> | Social studies, health education                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

#### PROCEDURE

Explain to students that in this activity they will evaluate different ways to work for the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons.

Divide students into small groups. For each group prepare an envelope containing one complete set of statements from Handout 1: *Changing Legislation to Achieve Equality*, Handout 2: *Changing Attitudes to Achieve Equality*, and Handout 3: *Taking Action to Achieve Equality*. The statements should be cut into strips and mixed together before being put in the envelope. If students ask why the statements are printed on different colored paper, let them know you will tell them why at the end of the activity.

Each group should also have one sheet of butcher paper. The paper should be held lengthwise and divided into three columns. The columns should be headed: Essential, Useful, and Irrelevant.

| Essential | Useful | Irrelevant |
|-----------|--------|------------|
|           |        |            |

As the group members read each statement, they should try to place it in what they agree is the appropriate column. In essence, group members are answering the question: In order to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, which actions are essential, which are useful, and which are irrelevant?

When the group cannot agree, they should save that statement until they have placed the ones about which they can agree. They should then discuss the remaining statements and try to place them under the Essential, Useful, and Irrelevant columns.

Each group should try to reach a consensus. Members may alter the wording of a statement if it helps them to reach consensus. Blank slips of paper can be used to create additional statements if needed. When all the statements have been placed on the newsprint, they can be taped in place.

Groups should be allowed time to look at each other's finished sheets and to identify differences in priorities.

Groups should then return to their own sheet and note whether there is any pattern to how they have placed the different colored statements. At this time, the teacher should draw attention to the significance of the different colors on which the statements are printed.

Point out to the students that statements printed on white paper are about changing laws to bring about equality. Statements printed on blue paper are about changing people's attitudes to achieve equality, while the statements printed on yellow paper are about persons taking direct action towards equality.

Ask students to look at their chart again and discuss the following questions to debrief the activity:

- In general, what ideas or concerns guided you as you placed the statements under the three columns?

Point out to students that their answers to this question reveal their theories about how to bring about change for equal human rights.

- Was there a pattern for or against changing legislation, changing attitudes, or taking direct action?
- Why do you have preferences for working towards change in certain ways?

Make clear to students that there is no single, right way to work towards change. The goal of the exercise is not to determine which method of working for change is best. In fact, students may themselves point out the symbiotic connection, for example, between changing legislation to change attitudes and the need to change attitudes to change legislation. If anything, the activity should help students appreciate that all three strategies are important and that the goal is not to choose one but to balance all three.

**ACTIVITY 5: HANDOUT 1**

**CHANGING LEGISLATION TO ACHIEVE EQUALITY**

**TO BE COPIED ON WHITE PAPER**

Discrimination in employment against sexual minorities should be illegal.

The state should recognize same-sex marriages.

Laws against lesbian and gay sex (sodomy laws) should be repealed.

Same-sex partnerships should be recognized for immigration purposes.

Lesbians and gays should be allowed to serve as members of the armed forces.

The state should not prevent sexual minorities from adopting children and becoming foster parents.

Hate crime legislation should include violations against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons.

Partners in same-sex relationships should receive the same benefits (e.g., health care, retirement) from employers as partners in heterosexual relationships.



## LESSON 5: HANDOUT 2

# CHANGING ATTITUDES TO ACHIEVE EQUALITY

TO BE COPIED ON BLUE PAPER

In sex education, homosexuality and heterosexuality should be presented as equal.

Everyone who works with young people should undergo anti-heterosexist training, along with other diversity training.

Books about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons should be available to young persons.

Stereotypes of sexual minorities should be challenged.

The idea that homosexuality is unnatural should be challenged.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons and their accomplishments should be included in the school curriculum.

Same-sex affection in public places should be accepted.

Sexual minorities should learn about the experiences of other people who experience discrimination.

### LESSON 5: HANDOUT 3

## TAKING ACTION TO ACHIEVE EQUALITY

TO BE COPIED ON YELLOW PAPER

Closeted lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons who act against the interests of other sexual minorities should be "outed."

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons should reduce their "invisibility" by engaging in high-profile media events including demonstrations.

Those who support the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons should lobby the government, as well as religious and other institutions.

Supporters of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender human rights should work within mainstream institutions and organizations to achieve equality.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons should build coalitions and take action with other oppressed groups.

Supporters of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights should register a complaint whenever there is insensitive or inaccurate reporting in the media.

Supporters of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights should boycott those products and services from companies with discriminatory policies or that fund anti-human rights programs.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons should be out or open about their sexual orientation.

## ACTIVITY 6

# I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU . . .

## Same-Sex Marriage Legislation

This activity is taken from *At Issue: Marriage, Exploring the Debate over Marriage Rights for Same-Sex Couples* published by GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network. The complete curriculum is available through the GLSEN Bookstore (800/247-6553 or <http://www.atlasbooks.com/glsen/>).

### OVERVIEW

In December 1999 Vermont became the first U.S. state to rule that the benefits and protections of marriage be conferred on same-sex couples. The Vermont legislature is currently deciding whether this decision will be fulfilled through full civil marriage or a separate but equal system, a painfully familiar dilemma within the context of American civil rights history. The Vermont legislature is not the first governing body—regional or national—to grapple with the question of same-sex marriage. Over the past 11 years, more than 20 countries worldwide have enacted some form of legislation that impacts same-sex couples. In this activity, students will apply the history of “separate but equal,” taken from the era of racial segregation, to the question before the Vermont legislature today. Students will then assume the role of advisors, making recommendations to the Vermont legislature based upon international human rights practices and the current regulations of other nations.

### OBJECTIVES

- To understand the recent Vermont decision and the question currently before the legislature
- To apply historical learnings about “separate but equal” to the same-sex marriage debate
- To consider international human rights practices as one criterion by which a decision in Vermont might be reached
- To consider the practices of other nations in formulating a recommendation for the Vermont State Legislature

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Age Level:</b>     | High school                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Time:</b>          | 2 hours 10 minutes-3 hours 25 minutes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Materials:</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handout 1: <i>Separate but Equal?</i></li> <li>• Handout 2: <i>What Does "Separate but Equal" Look Like?</i></li> <li>• Handout 3: <i>International Recognition of Same-Sex Relationships</i></li> <li>• The Universal Declaration of Human Rights</li> </ul> |
| <b>Subject Areas:</b> | Social studies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## PROCEDURE

### Part 1: Setting the Stage

Read the overview of this activity to students to provide background information on *Baker v. State of Vermont*, the landmark 1999 decision that ruled the benefits and protections of marriage be extended to same-sex couples. Emphasize that the Vermont Supreme Court decision establishes the *rights* of same-sex couples, but not the *system* by which those rights will be delivered. The Vermont legislature has been charged with this weighty task and is expected to begin hearings in 2000. Thousands of citizens from across the nation have already bombarded the legislature with demands that access to full civil marriage be granted or denied to same-sex couples. Some of those opposed to full marriage rights are pressuring the legislature to implement a "separate but equal" system of registered partnership like the ones adopted by at least seven nations to date (Denmark, Norway, Greenland, Sweden, Iceland, the Netherlands, and France).

Inform students that during this exercise they will be assuming the role of advisory panel members appointed by the Vermont legislature to study the same-sex marriage issue and make informed recommendations. In order to accomplish this task, they will consider three areas:

- Historical parallels to the notion of "separate but equal"; specifically, lessons learned from the era of racial segregation;
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and just practices within the context of international humanitarian standards;
- The practices of other nations that have enacted legislation regarding same-sex unions—learning from their successes and mistakes.

Select six students to act as the Vermont legislature, a group that will be charged with hearing recommendations and raising questions. Divide the remaining students into groups of four and inform them that each group represents an advisory unit that will present its recommendations at the end of the activity.

## **Part 2: Looking Back, Looking Forth: Historical Parallels to "Separate but Equal"**

Tell students that the Vermont case is not the first instance in which a "separate but equal" system of justice has been debated. A legal precedent for "separate but equal"—with regard to racial segregation—was established in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and was not reversed until the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (1954). Distribute Handout 1: *Separate but Equal?* and allow students time to read the case summaries (if they have not already done so for homework).

Direct the groups toward Handout 2: "*What Does Separate but Equal Look Like?*" Instruct each group to consider the practical or day-to-day ramifications of a "separate but equal" system. On the left side of the sheet they should list what "separate but equal" looked like for African Americans living between the *Plessy* and *Brown* decisions, paying special attention to the social and emotional consequences of such a system. For example, students might indicate that young people had to travel great distances to reach a "colored" school or that African Americans had to remain thirsty—even with a fountain nearby—until a "colored" fountain could be found. They might also think about what this system looked like for white Americans, who may never have had opportunities to relate to people who looked different from themselves.

On the right side of the worksheet, students should list what "separate but equal" would be like for same-sex couples living under a system of registered partnership instead of marriage. This column will be significantly more challenging to complete as most of us have never been asked to consider the lives of sexual minorities with as much thought as we have been asked to reflect upon the experiences of racial minorities. Students might write that same-sex couples would be limited in terms of where, when, and to whom they could go to secure a "separate but equal" partnership license. In addition, couples might find that the alternative designation results in fewer religious leaders willing to perform a ceremony, and fewer friends and family members acknowledging that they are as "married" as different sex couples.

The group of six representing the state legislature should participate in this activity, but should generate questions raised by the "separate but equal" issue that they can later pose to the advisory panel. For example:

- If same-sex couples receive full marriage rights, then how are they harmed by a separate designation for their relationships?
- If there is no difference in the benefits conferred, then why should we [the legislators] entertain the notion of a separate system for conferring those rights?

## **Part 3: An International Human Rights Perspective**

Ask groups to turn next to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Emphasize that, as opposed to civil or legal rights, human rights are defined as those basic standards people need to live in dignity. Human rights are the rights people have simply because they are human.



Ask groups to consider whether or not they feel that the spirit of the UDHR compels governments to extend full marriage rights to all people, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender couples. Instruct each group to survey the documents and discuss this question. Groups will likely notice that Article 16 asserts the right to marriage and family; encourage groups to look for other articles that might also relate to the issue of same-sex marriage, such as the right to equality (Article 1), freedom from discrimination (Article 2), and other relevant articles. Remind students that their ultimate goal is to make an informed recommendation to the legislature, so they should take notes and begin to articulate their thoughts. As stated earlier, the six legislators should discuss the documents and record important questions in anticipation of the presentations to come.

#### **Part 4: Think Globally, Act Locally**

Tell students that many countries have been grappling with the issue of same-sex marriage for years. Each group will therefore be asked to study the same-sex union practices of two or three nations in an attempt to understand better the issue at hand and to make a more informed recommendation to Vermont lawmakers. Cut Handout 3: *International Recognition of Same-Sex Relationships* into strips, one country per strip—12 countries are represented here, though there are at least a dozen more that have enacted some sort of same-sex couple legislation. Distribute two or three strips (countries) to each group for consideration. Instruct students to discuss the pros and cons of each country's laws and to extract ideas that can be incorporated into their presentations to the legislature. The six legislators should review all 12 summaries and search for patterns, confusions, and potential problems that they can later bring up. It is important for all groups to note that no country has yet provided full marriage equality. While registered partnership provides most of the benefits, it differs from marriage in that:

- registered partners usually cannot adopt non-related children, or even each other's children
- registered partners usually cannot have an "official" church wedding in the country's established national church
- one of the two registered partners must be a citizen of the country in which the partnership is contracted
- registered partnerships are not recognized outside of the country in which the partnership is contracted (except for the small union of Scandinavian nations)

These issues—particularly adoption, citizenship, and movement between countries—should be given special attention during small group discussion and the presentations that will follow shortly.

### Part 5: Group Presentations

In preparation for their presentations, give each group some time to review its notes and develop recommendations. Inform each group that they will have five minutes to present, and that their recommendations should include learnings from each of the three tasks they were asked to complete. Direct groups to decide if they will elect a spokesperson or divide the presentation amongst group members. When the groups are ready, ask the six legislators to sit at the front of the classroom in order to preside over the proceedings. Make sure that each advisory group keeps to its five-minute limit and allow the legislators to pose only two or three questions to each group.

When all the groups have presented, direct the six legislators to retire to their chambers (the corridor outside your classroom will do) in order to draft a plan based upon the advisory panel's recommendations. While they are working, conduct a debriefing conversation with the class. Ask them to comment upon what they have learned and the process in which they have participated. Ask students what they think the Vermont legislature should do based on their new knowledge. When the six legislators are ready, invite them in to share their plan. Encourage students to follow the news and look for updates on the situation in Vermont. You might also want to have them formally write up the plan and send it directly to Vermont lawmakers.



## ACTIVITY 6: HANDOUT 1

# SEPARATE BUT EQUAL?

In 2000, the Vermont state legislature will begin hearings to decide whether to grant same-sex couples access to full civil marriage or a "separate but equal" system of domestic partnership. The question of whether separate can ever be equal has been debated frequently, perhaps most passionately within the context of racial segregation in the United States. Read the summaries below of the two pivotal cases that established and dismantled the legal concept of separate but equal as it related to racial segregation. Consider the lessons of these cases and the implications for same-sex marriage legislation today.

### **Plessy v. Ferguson**

On June 7, 1892, a 30-year-old "colored" shoemaker named Homer Plessy was jailed for sitting in the "white" car of the East Louisiana Railroad. Plessy was only one-eighth black and seven-eighths white, but under Louisiana law, he was considered black and therefore required to sit in the "Colored" car. Plessy went to court and argued, in *Homer Adolph Plessy v. The State of Louisiana*, that the Separate Car Act violated the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution (which abolished slavery and enforced the equality of the races before the law).

The judge at the trial was John Howard Ferguson, a lawyer from Massachusetts who had previously declared the Separate Car Act "unconstitutional on trains that traveled through several states." In Plessy's case, however, he decided that the state could choose to regulate railroad companies that operated only within Louisiana. He found Plessy guilty of refusing to leave the white car.

Plessy appealed to the Supreme Court of Louisiana, which upheld Ferguson's decision. In 1896, the Supreme Court of the United States heard Plessy's case and found him guilty once again. The *Plessy* decision set the precedent that "separate" facilities for blacks and whites were constitutional as long as they were "equal." The "separate but equal" doctrine was quickly extended to cover many areas of public life, such as restaurants, theaters, restrooms, and public schools.

### **Brown v. Board of Education**

In Topeka, Kansas, in the 1950s, a black third-grader named Linda Brown had to walk one mile through a railroad switchyard to get to her black elementary school, even though a white elementary school was only seven blocks away. Linda's father, Oliver Brown, tried to enroll her in the white elementary school, but the principal of the school refused. Brown went to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for help. In 1951, the NAACP requested an injunction that would forbid the segregation of Topeka's public schools. At the trial, the NAACP argued that segregated schools sent the message to black children that they were inferior to whites; therefore, the schools were inherently unequal.

The precedent of *Plessy v. Ferguson* allowed separate but equal school systems for blacks and whites, and no Supreme Court ruling had overturned *Plessy* yet. Because of the precedent of *Plessy*, the court felt "compelled" to rule in favor of the Board of Education.

Brown and the NAACP appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court on October 1, 1951, and their case was combined with other cases that challenged school segregation in South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware. On May 17, 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren read the decision of the unanimous Court:

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other "tangible" factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does...We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal...

The Supreme Court struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine of *Plessy* for public education, ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, and required the desegregation of schools across America. The Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision did not abolish segregation in other public areas, such as restaurants and restrooms, nor did it require desegregation of public schools by a specific time. It did, however, declare the permissive or mandatory segregation that existed in 21 states unconstitutional. It was a giant step towards complete desegregation of public schools.

### **Baker v. State of Vermont**

In a landmark decision, the Vermont Supreme Court ruled on December 20, 1999 in favor of three same-sex couples who challenged the constitutionality of Vermont's marriage laws. Writing for the court, Justice Amestoy declared,

The extension of the common benefits clause to acknowledge plaintiffs as Vermonters who seek nothing more, nor less, than legal protection and security for their avowed commitment to an intimate and lasting human relationship is simply, when all is said and done, a recognition of our common humanity.

The court concluded that the benefits and protections of marriage must be extended to same-sex couples. The court directed the legislature to remedy the discrimination, making Vermont the first state in the union to extend the legal rights of marriage to same-sex couples. The Vermont state legislature is now faced with the question of whether to extend full civil marriage to same-sex couples or to create a separate but equal system.

The *Plessy v. Ferguson* and *Brown v. Board of Education* cases present historical parallels that cannot be overlooked in deciding the fate of same-sex Vermont couples. What do you think Vermont legislators should take away from past lessons in arriving at a just decision today?



## ACTIVITY 6: HANDOUT 2

### WHAT DOES "SEPARATE BUT EQUAL" LOOK LIKE?

*For over 50 years, African Americans were forced to live under a system of segregation made legal by the Plessy v. Ferguson precedent. What did this system look like on a day-to-day basis for Americans? What were the social and emotional ramifications for all people? Below, describe some of the features of a racially segregated way of living.*

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**Example:** Black children often had to travel great distances and endure physical hardships on a daily basis to get to a "colored" school.

*The Vermont state legislature will soon determine whether or not same-sex couples will live within a "separate but equal" segregated system of partnership. What would this look like on a day-to-day basis? What would be the social and emotional ramifications for all people? Below, describe some of the features of a segregated system of partnership.*

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**Example:** Friends, colleagues, and family members might not consider same-sex partners to be really married and might treat them differently (e.g., not inviting a spouse to Thanksgiving dinner).

### ACTIVITY 6: HANDOUT 3

## INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

Parts of this summary have been excerpted from texts originally published by the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) and Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund Marriage Project.

### Argentina

In 1997, legislation was passed allowing gays and lesbians to claim a widow's or widower's pension. In 1998, a union-run health care program for teachers and flight attendants was extended to include health coverage for domestic partners. Also in 1998, a court recognized the common-law marriage of a homosexual couple. The ruling—the first of its kind in Argentina—grants health benefits to the same-sex partner. (A common-law marriage is a marriage recognized in some jurisdictions and based on the parties' agreement to consider themselves married and sometimes also on their cohabitation).

### Brazil

Surveys in the Brazilian state capitals of Salvador, Curitiba, and Aracaju found that 60 to 80 percent of Brazilians believe gays must have the same rights as heterosexuals and 50 to 65 percent think gay couples should be able to get married. At least 73 Brazilian cities and towns—including Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Brasilia—ban discrimination based on sexual orientation. Legislation to create civil-union contracts for same-sex couples was introduced nationally by Worker's Party Deputy Marta Suplicy in 1995. In 1998, the Brazilian High Court decided to grant property rights to surviving partners in same-sex relationships. Businessman Milton Alves Pedrosa won by unanimous decision of the Brazilian High Court the right to half of the estate of his partner, who died of AIDS in 1989.

### Canada

In 1996, the Canadian government extended health, relocation, and other job benefits to the same-sex partners of federal employees. During the same year, the Ontario Court of Appeal ruled that same-sex couples must be treated as common-law couples under the Family Law Act. (Common-law refers to marriages recognized in some jurisdictions and based on the parties' agreement to consider themselves married and sometimes also on their cohabitation). In 1997, legislation recognized gay and lesbian couples as legal spouses for purposes of child custody and adoption. In 1999, the Canadian Supreme Court ruled 8-1 that where protec-

tions are provided to "spouses," they must be available to same-sex couples. While the Canadian federal and provincial governments will now have to rewrite laws to include same-sex couples, the Court did not yet address the freedom to marry itself, as that was not presented in the case. A poll subsequent to the decision found that a strong majority, 53%, of the Canadian public across provincial and demographic lines supports gay people's freedom to marry.

### **Denmark (including Greenland)**

In 1989, Denmark became the first country to legalize same-sex unions and has since provided a model to other Scandinavian states. By the end of 1991 about 1000 such unions had taken place; 3000 by then end of 1995. Registered Partnership, as it is called, brings many of the rights associated with marriage, including those of property, inheritance, immigration, taxation, and social security. Although the ceremony creates a legal bond enforceable by law, it is not the same as marriage between men and women—gay/lesbian couples are not granted access to adoption, artificial insemination, in-vitro fertilization, or church weddings. Also one partner must be a citizen of Denmark.

### **France**

In 1999, French lawmakers passed domestic partnership legislation that treats unmarried couples the same as married couples. The French National Assembly voted 315-249 for the Civil Solidarity Pact, first introduced in 1998 by the Socialist majority. The new measure gives unmarried couples about the same financial, property, and social welfare benefits awarded married couples. Immigration, inheritance, and taxation benefits are included, but adoption rights are not. Couples began registering Jan. 1, 2000. The French government estimates the law will affect about 4.4 million unmarried heterosexual couples, but makes no guess as to the number of same-sex couples that will benefit.

### **Hungary**

In an odd legal decision, the Hungarian Constitutional Court legalized "common-law" gay marriage on March 8, 1995. (A couple that lives together permanently and has sex is considered married under common law). The court said a law limiting common-law marriages to "those formed between adult men and women" was unconstitutional. "It is arbitrary and contrary to human dignity ... that the law withholds recognition from couples living in an economic and emotional union simply because they are same-sex," the court wrote. The justices ordered parliament to make the changes necessary to implement common-law gay marriage in 1996. The oddity was that the court also ruled that formal, civil marriages are for heterosexual couples only. "Despite growing acceptance of homosexuality (and) changes in the traditional definition of a family, there is no reason to change the

law on (civil) marriages". This ruling was the result of a legal action by the leading Hungarian gay group, Homeros. Hungary's Cohabitation law provides all marital rights to same-sex couples except for access to adoption.

### **Iceland**

The Althinget [Parliament] created a gay rights commission that recommended in 1994 to legalize gay/lesbian marriage, criminalize discrimination against gays, and substantially increase education about gays in schools. In 1996, Iceland created a Registered Partnership based on the 1989 Danish legislation. Registered Partnership brings many of the rights associated with marriage, including those of property, inheritance, immigration, taxation, and social security. Although the ceremony creates a legal bond enforceable by law, it is not the same as marriage between men and women—gay/lesbian couples were not granted access to artificial insemination, in-vitro fertilization, or church weddings. Also one partner must be a citizen of Iceland. One significant difference between the Icelandic law and Denmark's legislation is that Iceland's registered partners are able to adopt children, but only if biologically related to one of the partners.

### **Netherlands**

A 1995 report indicated that over 90 Dutch towns had registries for the unions of same-sex couples. Gays in some professions, including civil service, health care, and education, as well as employees of the airline KLM, have been receiving spousal benefits since before that time. In 1998, the Netherlands passed the Partner Registration Act, which grants both same-sex and different sex couples most rights and duties of matrimony, except access to adoption. At the beginning of 1999, bills were introduced that would open up full civil marriage to persons of the same-sex, allow adoption of children by same-sex couples, and eliminate discrimination in artificial insemination. A four-year process of Parliamentary debate is expected before the proposals become law. If they pass, the Netherlands will likely be the first nation to open marriage—not some related legal union—to same-sex couples.

### **Norway**

Norway became the second country to make gay and lesbian unions legal in 1993. The legislation passed the Odelsting chamber of the Norwegian parliament by a vote of 58-40 on March 29 and the Lagting chamber by a vote of 18-16 on April 1. Registered Partnership, as it is called, brings many of the rights associated with marriage, including those of property, inheritance, immigration, taxation, and social security. Although the ceremony creates a legal bond enforceable by law, it is not the same as marriage between men and women—gay/lesbian couples are not granted access to adoption, artificial insemination, in-vitro fertilization, or church weddings. Also one partner must be a citizen of Norway. A statement from the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs was released following the legislation: "Regardless of

the accepted attitude towards the institution of marriage as a bearing element in society, it should be possible to regulate the practical sides of a homosexual relationship without thereby putting marriage and homosexual partnerships on an equal footing."

### **South Africa**

On May 8, 1996, South Africa became the first country in the world to constitutionally prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. In 1997, South Africa's ruling party, the African National Congress, passed a wide-ranging resolution on gay and lesbian equality, including a call for Parliament to legalize same-sex marriage. In a related decision, a court ruled that a woman may name her female partner as a "dependent" for purposes of receiving medical aid even though that term had been defined as including only spouses. Archbishop Desmond Tutu has called discrimination against lesbians and gay men the moral equivalent of apartheid, and declared lesbian and gay equality as the world's next moral goal.

### **Spain**

After decades of repression under the Franco regime, Spain's gay culture has seen a massive upsurge since the late 1970s. In 1995 it was reported that roughly 30 Spanish cities registered "civil" same-sex unions, including Barcelona, Cordoba, Granada, Ibiza, Toledo, and Valencia (which has a regional law). In 1998, domestic partnership legislation for both same-sex and different sex couples was passed. The new law provides inheritance and pension rights, job benefits, and rights for public employees. It does not, however, provide adoption rights for same-sex couples or shared social security or immigration rights.

### **Sweden**

A law legalizing the union of same-sex couples came into effect in 1995. The law passed quite narrowly with a parliamentary vote of 171 to 141 with 5 abstentions and 32 absences. The Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt was quoted as saying: "We accept homosexual love as equivalent to heterosexual. Love is an important force to personal as well as social development, and should therefore not be denied." Sweden's law is based upon earlier Danish legislation. Registered Partnership, as it is called, brings many of the rights associated with marriage, including those of property, inheritance, immigration, taxation, and social security. Although the ceremony creates a legal bond enforceable by law, it is not the same as marriage between men and women—gay/lesbian couples are not granted access to adoption, artificial insemination, in-vitro fertilization, or church weddings. Also one partner must be a citizen of Sweden.





*The defense of human rights of homosexuals [solely] by homosexuals is impossible—or at best [places them] in imminent peril of their lives. The struggle must be taken up by outsiders, gay or straight people, who are not themselves the victims of this hostile society. ...[Homosexuality] is only one of many reasons why people are so stigmatized.*

Juan Pablo Ordonez  
Colombian Human Rights Activist

## ACTIVITY 7

# YOUTH DEALING WITH HOMOPHOBIA: STORIES FROM REAL LIFE

### What Can We Do?

#### OVERVIEW

In this activity, students listen to the concerns of real teenagers dealing with homophobia or read testimonials from gay and straight students and teachers about dealing with homophobia. All of the stories illustrate how homophobia contributes to a climate of hostility, making adolescence especially hard to navigate. The activity concludes with a discussion of what can be done to make schools less hostile to gay and lesbian youth.

#### OBJECTIVES

- To put a human face on the issue of homophobia and its effects on gay and straight students
- To consider how to create an environment that respects all persons regardless of sexual orientation

|                       |                                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Age Level:</b>     | High school to adult            |
| <b>Time:</b>          | About 45 minutes                |
| <b>Materials:</b>     | Handout 1: <i>Testimonials</i>  |
| <b>Subject Areas:</b> | Social studies, English, health |

#### PROCEDURE

Testimonials are a way to put a human face on the issue of homophobia and the resultant isolation, fear, depression, and anger that its victims report. By hearing the voices and stories of real people, homophobia is moved from the intellectual to the personal domain, and it becomes increasingly difficult for compassionate human beings to ignore or discount the need for anti-homophobia education in their schools. Ideally, you should gather a panel of people from your local school or community who can speak directly about their experiences with homophobia. Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is an organization with groups in many communities in the United States that may be able to assist in putting

together such a panel. Allow panel members to speak about their own experiences and follow up with questions and answers from students. You may want to discuss possible questions with the students ahead of time.

If you are unable to bring together a panel, students should read Handout 1: *Testimonials* for homework or in class. Ask them to highlight a word, phrase, or passage that particularly moves or strikes them as they read each story.

Begin class by asking students to write for five or ten minutes about the meaning of their highlighted text. Ask students to share their writing.

Use the following questions to continue discussion:

- In what ways do these young people experience isolation and loneliness?
- In what ways are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender teenagers "invisible?" To each other? To their friends? To their parents? To the community?
- What role do parents play in their children's acceptance of self?
- What role do other lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people play in the acceptance of self?
- What role do friends play in the acceptance of self?
- Who else plays an important role?

To move the discussion toward responsibility for creating a positive school environment for students—both gay and straight—facing homophobia, ask the following questions:

- In what ways do these stories describe what could happen to a student at your school?
- What could be done to make school a more positive place for the students telling these stories?
- What could you do to make school a more positive place?

Encourage students to follow through on suggestions for promoting tolerance at school. Possibilities might include:

- Not laughing at homophobic jokes

In this case, students could role play how they might respond the next time they hear an offensive joke. What would they say to the person telling the joke?

- Supporting a LGBT friend

Again, students could act out skits of how they might respond to someone coming out, or they could write an entry in their journal about what they would do.

- Providing information for LGBT students

Books about homosexuality are hard to keep on school library shelves. Many students, too embarrassed to check them out, take them instead. A group of students could talk to the school librarian about good books for gay and lesbian teens. As a class project, students could raise the money necessary to buy these books for the library.

- Promoting dialog between LGBT and straight students

Some schools have gay-straight alliances that work to promote tolerance. Organizations such as the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) and Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) can provide more information about forming such a group.



## ACTIVITY 7: HANDOUT 1

### TESTIMONIALS

#### Stories of Youth Facing Homophobia

The following readings are personal accounts by a teacher and students of their experiences as lesbian and gay people, and with homophobia. Numbers 1-6 were written by lesbian and gay students, number 7 is by a teacher, and 8-10 were written by straight students. All these testimonials are reprinted from GLSEN training materials.

#### **STUDENT, 17, LESBIAN:**

"I'm 17 and I'm gay. Adolescence is hell for me. I am told that my sexuality is something to be ashamed of, something to hide, something evil. I have cowered in my closet in shame and fear. I found myself lying to my parents and friends, being constantly afraid of discovery, and censoring my words and actions with paranoid concentration. I remember hiding books from my parents because I was ashamed of them discovering about me. In short, I hated my sexuality and myself. My closet wasn't a refuge; it was a prison and it was destroying me. By staying silent, I was confirming the emotions that were killing me inside. I am not just a statistic. I live in a Boston suburb in a white house with black shutters. I go to school every day, feeling that I can't be honest, that I have no right to be proud, that I am a second-class citizen. Just this past week, as I was walking down my street in my town where I have lived all of my life, a pick-up truck full of guys ran me off the road, screaming, 'You lesbian!' at me. Homophobia is everywhere, and bigotry is inexcusable. It's time to start showing you care."

#### **STUDENT, 16, LESBIAN, ATTENDING BOARDING SCHOOL:**

"I wish I could be more open with my parents, but having realized that my father might cause me physical harm, I realize that this is not an option. I live in utter dread that someone will let something slip, or that they'll see or find something that will tell them I'm a lesbian. Before they arrived for the weekend, I scoured my room, jamming the newspapers, the buttons, the pins, anything with the word 'gay' on it in the bottom drawer under every item of summer clothing I could jam in there. When they arrived – early – they spent a moment or two in my room, unguarded. Luckily, they didn't find anything. Nor, luckily, did they find anything when my mother cleaned my desk out at home. But when I'm with people I'm not out to, I'm always on guard against what might slip out. It makes me very tense."



### STUDENT, 17, LESBIAN:

"Imagine that you are looking at the world through the bottom of a glass. The image you get is distorted, twisted, and sometimes frightening, and who you are and your life experiences color the way you see things. I look at my life in this way: each part of me is a tint that is put in front of the glass and shades everything around me. Imagine now that I am looking and there is a black tint to the glass. This color, this blackness, represents my race and my background. I come from Harlem, New York. I am a first-generation American, my family being from Jamaica and, without any exaggeration, we are poor. We are on welfare. There are eight of us who live in a two bedroom apartment with three beds to share. I am part of the America most people don't want to see and never encounter unless it is through the media or while driving through my neighborhood, safely tucked away in their cars. Imagine how baffled I was when I set foot in Wallingford, Connecticut, to attend Choate. Carefully manicured lawns and for the first time in my life I had my own room, my own bed, my own space. Imagine how angry I was last year when a carload of kids drove by and screamed, 'Nigger, go back to Africa!' Sometimes, looking at the world through this glass, I lose faith in it and its people. How can some people have so much and others so little? How can some people be so ignorant and malicious? Can you see through the black-tinted glass I am looking through? Now imagine there is a pinkish tint to the glass. Things pink stands for my sexual identity. I am a lesbian. To break it down even further for you: I love women, I don't hate me, I just love women. But getting to the point where I could say this was not easy. Before I came to terms with my homosexuality, I had to get rid of my own internal homophobia and a lifetime of anti-homosexual programming. Growing up I had feelings for other women. I didn't know what they meant, but I knew it was something I was taught was not right, and I hated myself for it. I thought I was the most disgusting thing on the face of the earth, not worthy of being loved or of even existing. This winter I had a long talk with a good friend of mine. With her I started a process of questioning, reflecting, and eventually coming out to myself. And now here I am. What does all of this mean? Well, four years ago I would never have said any of this. Four years ago, I was ashamed of my background and terrified that someone might find out I was from Harlem. Four years ago I couldn't even accept that I was a lesbian. But I have changed and gained strength from the faculty members and friends I have met at Choate, and I feel you can learn something from my experience. Take risks. Be proud of who you are, every part of you. Dare to be different. Dare to be who you are. And even though the glass that we all look through may be frightening, tinted, or for some, even broken, it doesn't always have to be that way."

**STUDENT, 18, GAY:**

"I remember back in high school, before I dropped out, feeling really out of place and alone. I never quite understood why I felt so different. I didn't withdraw from anything – in fact, I was kind of popular, playing on the soccer team and all. I had a girlfriend for three years but the whole time it was a lie. Everything I did was never true to me. It was what everybody said I was supposed to be doing or what I thought I was supposed to be doing. I had this friend Mike. He and I were best friends for the longest time and, as time went on, I realized I was in love with him. It felt so wrong, like there was something wrong with me, and I just couldn't handle it any more. I had nowhere to go, no one to talk to. When I did confide in a school counselor, she screwed my life up. She went back to my parents and told them all these things I had been saying. I never told her I was gay because to me being gay meant you put on lipstick and wore dresses because that's all you ever see on TV, and I never thought that was me. I got kicked out of my house in July. There was violence involved. My mother came at me with an iron and I called the police. The police came and my mother told them I was always in Boston with fags and that I'm doing this and doing that. The policeman started to crack all these fag jokes and telling me what he would do if his kids were gay and told me that I should leave. I said, 'Where am I supposed to go?' He said, 'That's not my problem.' And my mother took my keys and made me leave. I went to a friend's house. By that time I had come out to a lot of my friends. It was okay to have a gay friend but when it came time and I needed somebody's support, it wasn't okay to help me out. 'What would people say about me?' these 'friends' said."

**STUDENT, 18, GAY:**

"I think it's fair to say I grew up without any real role models. There aren't Asian-Americans on TV—Connie Chung and a few Fu Manchu rip-offs don't really count. There are even fewer gays and lesbians. Experiencing life as a double minority has given me insight into how people focus on the parts of a person rather than on the whole. About a year and a half ago, I came out. Being involved in a support group helped me overcome my confusion and helped me to become proud of my sexuality. But I began to distance myself from my cultural heritage. The Chinese family sees homosexuality as abnormal and immoral. This caused me to hate myself for being yellow. Reconciling and integrating my sexual identity and cultural backboard is a major obstacle for me. I am not 'out' to my parents, who highly value Chinese traditions. This puts an incredible barrier between us. I am afraid they will be deeply hurt and confused when I decide to share this part of my life with them."

**STUDENT, 19, LESBIAN:**

"It was easy for me to be 'out' because I had dropped out of high school. But for one person in my life it was different—my little brother. He still had to deal with high school peer pressure. When I came out to him, he begged me to keep it from his friends. He said that if his friends ever found out they would leave him, even torment him, all because of me. I couldn't understand why he couldn't accept me for who I was and put me ahead of his friends. I didn't realize how bad it was, until recently. About two months ago my brother invited some of his high school friends to sleep over. That night, I fell asleep watching TV in the living room, which is right next to my brother's room. Around four in the morning I woke up from the noise they were making. They were talking about a kid who had come out to one of his friends, and that friend had then told their entire school. One of my brother's friends said that if any gay person came on to him he would kill him. One of the other kids said that homosexuals were sick and that they should be put on an island and bombed. Then someone else said maybe they should 'straighten this kid out'—meaning, beat him up. Everyone laughed. It was very frightening to hear all this hatred and anger coming from young kids, who have probably never known another gay person in their lives. I sneaked to my room and cried. I cried for myself. I cried for other gays and lesbians who have had to deal with situations like this. I cried for the young boy who had trusted a friend and had been betrayed. But most all, I cried for my brother. You see, through all of this, he kept quiet. He couldn't stand up for me because he was afraid. Afraid for himself. Afraid he would lose his friends. Afraid that their hatred and anger would be turned on him. For any student trying to get through high school, it is tough. But from someone like my brother, it is a cruel punishment. Right now he is just trying to survive, to graduate, without revealing his secret."

**TEACHER:**

"At 3:40 today Tracy called me and told me she had slashed her wrists and taken two bottles of pills. Tracy is a brave young woman who has struggled to come to terms with her sexual orientation and has bravely taken the lead in raising awareness on our campus as one of the heads of our Gay-Straight Alliance. She said to me on the phone, 'I always thought when I reached the breaking point, that it would be some big thing that pushed me over the edge. But it's not.' Later at the hospital, while waiting for her father to arrive from out of town, she said to me, 'What do I say when he asks me why did it?—Dad, I just don't fit in with the world?' As Tracy convulsed in her hospital bed, her stomach torn to bits by the pills she had taken, I murmured, 'I know, I know' and in fact I do know because—yes, just like you Tracy—I took 140 aspirin one night in high school because I couldn't see a way out. I couldn't see a future. I couldn't see a way to go on. You see, when you're a gay teenager, you don't need some big thing to push you over the edge, as Tracy discovered... You get the message every day in your life, just like Tracy did, that you just don't fit in with the world. You get it driven through your skull. Sooner or later you get the message. You get the point. Tracy got the point at about 3:40 this afternoon. Wonderful, brave Tracy, whom everybody thinks has it so together with her student leadership position and her 1420 on her SATs. Yeah, Tracy got the point today."

**STUDENT, 16, STRAIGHT:**

"Two years ago my parents got divorced and my mother started to have a lesbian relationship. This scared and confused me. She tried to talk to me about it, but I always pushed her away. As far as I was concerned, that topic was off-limits. I know I shouldn't push her away, but it's so hard for me to deal with. After hearing a speaker on LGBT issues at school, I called her to tell her about it and I felt like what I was really saying was "I realize and accept your relationship." It was likely I was finally admitting that my mother is a lesbian. I don't really know though, because I still haven't really talked to her about it. And I still don't think I can. That's the worst part. But I feel like that phone call was the first step. I feel like I'm carrying this big burden on my shoulders. I don't think any of my friends could understand or, worse still, they wouldn't want to get to know my mother and she's such a great person. My best friend adores my mom—in fact, she just invited Mom to her graduation. And I wonder, would she feel the same way if she knew about my mom's relationship? I remember learning: Don't expect the worst in people. But it's hard—it's hard to know who to trust."

**STUDENT, 17, STRAIGHT:**

"Four years ago, I learned that my mother is a lesbian. How is a girl who has just turned 13 supposed to react to that type of news. I felt life as I knew it was over. The woman who had borne me, nourished me, put clothes on my back and a roof over my head was a stranger. Homosexuality isn't like divorce. When my parents were getting divorced, so were some of my friends' parents. TV discussed the effects of divorce on children. Family member asked me how I felt and gave me words of advice and shoulders to cry on. But the horizon was bleak for homosexuality. There were no friends going through the same trauma. Relatives didn't flock to my side. There were no TV specials telling them how to deal with it. Phil Donahue, where were you? Life as I knew it didn't really end, though—it just changed slightly. The gay women I have come to know through my mother weren't flannel-clad bikers but a diverse group which includes corporate managers, lawyers, therapists, teachers, and artists, some of whom are also mothers. These Black women have class, intelligence, and confidence. I am lucky to have them as friends and role models."

**STUDENT, 17, STRAIGHT:**

"Matthew and I were walking down the street on our way to the bank. We walked by a man who was sitting on the steps of his brownstone. As we approached he began yelling at us: "Hey, gay boy! Can't you hear me fag? I'm talking to you! What are you doing with that girl? Stop killing us and stay with your own kind!" We tried to ignore him. "Why don't you answer me. I'm sick of you fags taking over? Don't you hear me?" I then realized that I could simply walk out of my house and be victimized by any bigot who chose to hurt me based on who my friends are, who I am, or who he thinks I might be."





*Sexual politics includes everything we know  
about growing up in families and living among straight  
folks, as well as everything they don't know and often  
refuse to know about our own lives as queers.*

Scott Tucker  
Activist-Writer

## ACTIVITY 8

# RIGHTS ABUSES AROUND THE WORLD

## What Can We Do?

### OVERVIEW

In this activity, students read an Urgent Action information sheet from Amnesty International and a petition about human rights abuses against sexual minorities outside the USA. This activity helps students understand how to write on behalf of prisoners of conscience or against human rights abuses. The activity concludes with students writing a letter on a currently active Amnesty International case.

### OBJECTIVES

- To understand the oppression faced by gays and lesbians in other parts of the world
- To develop and implement appropriate strategies for addressing human rights abuses in the world

Age Level: High school to adult

Time: About 45 minutes

Materials:

- Handout 1: *Romanian Urgent Action Case*
- Handout 2: *Sample Letter*
- Handout 3: *Gay Romanians Have a Long Way to Go*
- Handout 4: *Current Urgent Action Case\**
- Handout 5: *Editor's Feedback Form*
- Handout 6: *Petition Form*

Subject Areas: Social studies, English

\* To obtain a current case, look at the Amnesty International USA OUTfront Website at [www.amnestyusa.org/group/outfront](http://www.amnestyusa.org/group/outfront) or the Urgent Action Office, specifying a LGBT case, at email: [sharriso@aiusa.org](mailto:sharriso@aiusa.org). Tel: (303) 440-0913.

### PROCEDURE

#### Part 1: How to take effective action

Distribute copies of Handout 1: *Romanian Urgent Action Case* to students. They can read this in class or as homework in preparation for this class.

Ask the following questions:

- Why would the Romanian government care about a letter from an Amnesty International member in the U.S.?
- What would make a letter effective?

Explain that prompt, brief, and courteous letters are most appropriate. Distribute Handout 2: *Sample Letter* on the Romanian case. Ask students to highlight words or phrases that illustrate courtesy. Discuss why it is important to maintain a polite tone even if we are angry at human rights abuses.

- How might the Romanian government act if this letter were not courteous and respectful?
- What might be the consequences for the prisoner of conscience?

#### What happened in the case?

These two men were released from prison, in large part, as a result of pressure from international letter writers! Romanian law still criminalizes homosexuality, however, raising the possibility that other gay men and lesbians will be imprisoned.

Handout 3: *Gay Romanians Have a Long Way to Go* describes the individuals and the social context involved in this case. You may want to assign it to students to give additional background.

#### Part 2: Taking action now—Letter writing

Ask students to read Handout 4: *Current Urgent Action Case*, obtained from the OUTfront Program or Urgent Action Network of Amnesty International USA. (See footnote on page 71.) Using the Romanian letter as a model, students should write a brief and courteous letter to the officials listed in the Urgent Action.

After students have completed their letters, ask them to work in pairs to edit them. The pairs should take responsibility for editing the letters to make them polished enough for sending to a head of state. To facilitate peer editing, each student should fill out a copy of Handout 5: *Editor's Feedback Form*. Students should return the original letter and the form to their partners, answering any questions the partners might have about comments or suggestions.

You may also wish to review the draft letters before students write their final drafts, using the editor's feedback form or writing your comments directly on the students' drafts.

Students should write a final draft of their letters incorporating their partners' editing comments.

### A note about sending the letters

Encourage students to send their letters by post or email. Explain that in most cases, students should not expect a response to their letter, even if they requested one. The power of Urgent Action letters comes in numbers. When thousands of people write on behalf of others' human rights, governments listen.

Some school boards and principals are concerned about students mailing letters to foreign officials. For most students, there are absolutely no repercussions to exercising their right of free expression to officials in other countries. Students who are citizens of these other countries or who have relatives there may not want to send their letters in order to protect their safety and that of family members. Letters should be sent only with the consent of the students who wrote them. For students who are not sending their letters, stress the value of this activity as an exercise in learning how to write a formal letter using careful language and persuasive supporting evidence.

### Part 3: Taking action now—Petitioning

Ask students to read Handout 6: *Petition Form* to the United States Secretary of State.

- Why would the Secretary of State care about a petition about human rights abuses in Uganda against gays and lesbians?
- What would make a petition effective?
- What language in this petition is effective in conveying a courteous tone?
- What language in this petition is effective in conveying what the petitioners want to see happen?

As a class, using the language from the letters to El Salvador, write a petition to the president of El Salvador. Ask for a volunteer to write a final copy of the petition on the computer and print it with lines where others can sign.

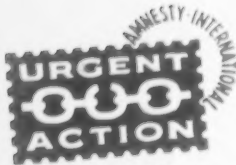
As a whole class, brainstorm how to get signatures on the petition. Distribute copies of the petition to students who are interested in collecting signatures. Signed petitions should be sent as a packet.

#### Updates on Urgent Actions

To find out if the situation on this Urgent Action has changed or to learn more about the most recent Urgent Action cases, visit the Urgent Action website at [www.amnesty-usa.org/urgact](http://www.amnesty-usa.org/urgact). For specific information about Urgent Action cases related to sexual orientation, go to: [www.amnesty-usa.org/write.html#outfront](http://www.amnesty-usa.org/write.html#outfront). The website of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission also posts information on how to take action against current abuses of sexual minorities' human rights. Their address is [www.iglhrc.org](http://www.iglhrc.org).

## ACTIVITY 8: HANDOUT 1

# ROMANIAN URGENT ACTION CASE



## URGENT ACTION APPEAL

URGENT ACTION PROGRAM OFFICE • P.O. Box 1270 • Nederland CO 80466-1270 • 303-440-0913 • FAX 303-258-7881

UA 125/93

Legal concern/Fear of ill-treatment

22 April 1993

ROMANIA:

Mirel Ciprian Cucu, 17

Milorad Mutascu, 22

Amnesty International has recently learned and is concerned that Mirel Ciprian Cucu and Milorad Mutascu have been arrested and charged solely for their homosexuality. The organization is further concerned that Milorad Mutascu, who is still in detention pending trial, may be subjected to torture or ill-treatment.

Mirel Ciprian Cucu and Milorad Mutascu were arrested on 22 January 1993 in Sinnicolau Mare, near Timisoara, and placed in preventive detention. Mirel Ciprian Cucu has been charged under Article 200 paragraph 1 of the Romanian Penal Code and faces a possible prison sentence of one to five years for "having sexual relations with a person of the same sex". He was released after two months' detention and is now awaiting trial. Milorad Mutascu has been charged under the same article, paragraph 2, for homosexual relations with a minor and faces a possible prison sentence of two to seven years. He is being held in preventive detention pending trial.

Mirel Ciprian Cucu reportedly met Milorad Mutascu in late November 1992 through an advertisement he had placed in the newspaper Publitim, asking to meet someone interested in "long-term friendship". The two men lived together in Timisoara in the apartment of Milorad's family. On 5 January 1993 they moved to a room in Sinnicolau Mare where they were arrested on 22 January 1993.

An article in the official police newspaper, Tim-polis, described the reason for the arrests exclusively in terms of the two men having had consensual sexual relations in private in a relationship which, without distinguishing between the ages of the two young men, was described as representing a danger to society. To this end the police newspaper vilified the younger man in particular as a "social danger" for initiating the relationship, while characterizing the two as "youths out of the control of society". Tim-polis while publicizing the case also implied that homosexual behaviour was a form of mental illness and disregarded the reputations or well-being of the two men, by publishing the names, photographs and addresses of the two even before formal charges were brought against them. There is no evidence that elements of coercion or exploitation were present in the relationship, both men have been treated as adults in terms of police procedure and preventive detention. Romanian law punishes sexual relations between men at any age, although a heterosexual relationship between people of the same ages would be lawful.

Amnesty International has recently received reports that homosexual men or persons suspected of being homosexual have been tortured or ill-treated in Romanian police stations and prisons and has asked the authorities to investigate these allegations.

This Urgent Action appeal originated from Amnesty International's research headquarters at the International Secretariat in London, United Kingdom. Amnesty International is an independent worldwide movement working for the international protection of human rights. It seeks the release of men and women detained anywhere because of their beliefs, color, sex, ethnic origin, language or religious creed, provided they have not used nor advocated violence. These are termed prisoners of conscience. It works for fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners and works on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial. It opposes the death penalty and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of all prisoners without reservation.



## ROMANIAN URGENT ACTION CASE

Amnesty International considers Milorad Mutascu to be a prisoner of conscience and is calling for his immediate release. Should Mirel Ciprian Cucu be tried and again imprisoned he, too, would be considered a prisoner of conscience. There is further concern that, pending release, Milorad Mutascu may be at risk from ill-treatment by police officers.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Article 200 paragraph 1 of the Romanian Penal Code states that "sexual intercourse between persons of the same sex is punishable by one to five years' imprisonment". In July 1992 representatives of Amnesty International were told by Romanian authorities that no one had been prosecuted for this offence since the fall of the Ceaucescu regime in December 1989 and that the proposed reform of the Penal Code will abolish this crime. Amnesty International urged the Romanian Minister of Justice, Petre Ninosu, to ensure that the proposed reform of the Romanian Penal Code will not permit the imprisonment of people solely because of their homosexuality.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern that Mirel Ciprian Cucu and Milorad Mutascu have been arrested and charged solely for their homosexuality;
- requesting the immediate release of Milorad Mutascu and that the charges against both of them be dropped;
- seeking assurances that Milorad Mutascu is not being ill-treated in custody;
- pointing out that both men would be prisoners of conscience if convicted and sentenced to imprisonment solely because of their consensual relations in private, which are the basis of the charges;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the planned reform of the Penal Code removes provisions in Article 200 by which people can be imprisoned solely by reason of their homosexuality.

### APPEALS TO

[Salutation]

#### 1. President:

[Dear President]

D-lui Ion Iliescu  
Presedintele României  
Piata Victoriei  
Bucuresti, Romania (Telegrams: Presendinte Iliescu, Bucuresti, Romania)  
(Faxes: 011 401 312 11 79)

#### 2. Minister of Justice:

[Dear Minister]

D-lui Petre Ninosu  
Ministru al Justitiei  
B-dul M Kogalniceanu 33  
Bucuresti Sector 5  
Romania (Telegrams: Ministru Petre Ninosu, Bucuresti Sector 5, Romania)  
(Faxes: 011 401 613 12 19)

#### 3. General Prosecutor:

[Dear General Prosecutor]

D-lui Manea Dragulin Vasile  
Procuror General al României  
B-dul Unirii Nr 2-4  
Bucuresti Sector 5  
Romania (Telegrams: Procuror General Dragulin Vasile, Bucuresti Sector 5, Romania)  
(Faxes: 011 401 781 62 85)

#### 4. Minister of Foreign Affairs:

[Dear Minister]

D-lui Teodor Viorel Melescanu  
Ministru Afacerilor Externe  
Piata Victoriei  
Bucuresti, Romania (Telegrams: Ministru Melescanu, Bucuresti, Romania)  
(Faxes: 011 401 312 75 89)

SEND COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO: Ambassador Aurel-Dragos Munteanu  
Embassy of Romania  
1607 23rd St. NW  
Washington DC 20008

Please send appeals immediately. Check with the Colorado office between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm, Mountain Time, weekdays only, if sending appeals after June 3, 1993.

## ACTIVITY 8: HANDOUT 2

### SAMPLE LETTER

500 Sansome Street  
San Francisco, California 94111  
23 April 1993

D-lui Ion Iliescu  
Presedintele Romaniei  
Piata Victoriei  
Bucaresti  
ROMANIA

Dear President:

I am writing to you out of concern for Mirel Ciprian Cucu and Milorad Mutascu, who have been arrested and charged solely for their homosexuality. They were arrested on 22 January 1993 under Article 200 of the Romanian Penal Code, which allows for a possible prison sentence of up to five years for having sexual relations with a person of the same sex. These men are in a consensual and private relationship. They present no danger to society.

I request that you do everything in your power to see that the charges against them are dropped and that Mr. Mutascu is released from prison. Please see that Mr. Mutascu is not ill-treated while he is held in custody.

I believe that both these men would be prisoners of conscience if they were convicted and sentenced solely because of their consensual relations in private. I urge you to abolish Article 200, which only punishes prisoners of conscience. Thank you for your attention to my requests. I would very much appreciate a reply.

Sincerely,

Joe Amnesty

cc: Ambassador Aurel-Dragos Munteanu  
Embassy of Romania  
1607 23rd Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20008

## ACTIVITY 8: HANDOUT 3

### GAY ROMANIANS HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO

# Gay Romanians Have a Long Way to Go Before They Can Break Through Taboos

01.01.94

by Barbara Demick, Knight-Ridder Newspapers

**BUCHAREST, Romania** — Milorad Mutusco hasn't been the same since he got out of prison.

"It made me afraid of people. It made me afraid of everything," said Mutusco, 23. "I thought about killing myself. The only thing that saved me was my belief in God."

Mutusco is a former detective from Timosoara, in western Romania. The crime that landed him 3 1/2 months in prison was violation of the Romanian penal code's article 200.

In plainer language, Mutusco is gay.

Romania is one of the last countries in Europe that imprisons homosexuals.

Laws dating to the regime of Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu make sexual relations between adults of the same sex punishable by one to five years in prison.

"Romania is the worst," says Scott Long, a monitor based in Cluj, in central Romania, for the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. "Almost all the other countries in Eastern Europe have revoked their anti-gay laws. Even Kazakhstan and Lithuania."

Long notes that Russia, at the insistence of President Boris Yeltsin, changed its law earlier this year, and most of the former Soviet republics followed suit.

Romania was admitted in October to the Council of Europe, a governmental body based in Strasbourg, France, that monitors political freedoms and human rights. As a condition of membership, Romania was told to abolish laws that discriminate against homosexuals.

But discussions about changing the law in the deeply homophobic Romanian parliament have frequently disintegrated into blustery debates over masculine conduct and national pride.

"I cannot agree with the misuse of bodily organs that have well-established functions," Dragomir Popescu, a senator from the ruling party, said during one such debate last month. "What about all those Romanians who conquered the world using their organs properly?" demanded another senator, Gheorghe Dumitrascu.

In Bucharest, federal law-enforcement authorities say they discourage local police from arresting and prosecuting homosexuals. "I believe the law is no longer enforced," Lucian Stingu, secretary of state in the Justice Ministry, said during a meeting with human-rights monitors in January.

Romanian-prison authorities told SIRDO, a Bucharest human-rights organization, in October that there were 67 people in Romanian prisons charged with homosexual offenses. Many of them had been jailed on other charges as well.

All of the homosexuals currently imprisoned were men, although SIRDO representatives say they have heard reports – although they have not confirmed them – of gay women being arrested in Bucharest within the last year.

"I think we might be one of the very few countries in the world with laws on the books that punish lesbians," said Razvan Ion, who heads SIRDO's gay-rights commission.

At least as recently as last winter, police in western and central Romania were still prosecuting homosexuals.

Milorad Mutusco and his lover had been involved for only six weeks and had just moved in together on January 2, when the police arrested them. Although they were both eventually given sentences of probation, the two were held for months without bail under what police called "preventative detention."

"It was awful. Every prisoner treated me like garbage," said Mutusco. "I can't really talk about it."

Just as bad, the Timosoara police aggressively publicized the arrest. The weekly police newspaper carried not only the names and photographs of the two lovers but also their home address.

The newspaper also branded the lovers as "potential perils to society," with the warning "AIDS is knocking at our portals" – even though there was not evidence that either carried the HIV virus that causes AIDS.

"My neighbors started treating me like a freak. I lost my friends," said Mutusco. "What hurt me the most was that my best friend, he was really like my blood brother, won't even speak to me any more because he is married."

Mutusco is one of the few Romanian gays who has been willing to allow his name to be used, he says, only because it was already publicized and because he is eager to see the law changed.

"I don't understand why the government persecutes homosexuals like this. What I do in private, that is between me and God," he says.

Another series of arrests took place in February in Sibiu, a Transylvanian city of 200,000 in central Romania.

There, six men, among them a newspaper publisher and a puppetmaster well-known in theater circles, were arrested and pressured to give names of other suspected homosexuals in what was described as a "witch hunt" by the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

"We weren't beaten. We weren't physically hurt, but it was really a mental torment," said one of the men, a Sibiu University student who spoke on the condition that his name not be used.

The student spent just a week in jail because his mother was able to raise the \$50 bail for his release. Others remained for up to two months before their release.

Human-rights workers, who reported on this case, say that the arrested men all were forced to undergo a physical examination in which doctors told them they had "modifications of the penis" that proved they had engaged in homosexual sex.

"These exams are ridiculous. I don't know of any test like that that proves anything," said Long, of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

None of the cases has yet gone to trial. Ioan Vestemean, the lawyer for two of the defendants, says the court proceedings have been delayed while the Romanian parliament debates changes in the law.

Several competing proposals in the law are being debated. The judiciary committee of the Romanian senate has proposed increasing the penalties for homosexual sex. Another proposal, backed by the administration of President Ion Iliescu, would moderate the law by making homosexual relations between consenting adults punishable only in cases "causing a public scandal."

Human-rights advocates are not happy with any of the versions. They point out that Romania is a country where it is not terribly difficult to cause "public scandal."

They also fear that a proposed clause to outlaw "public encouragement" of homosexuality could be wielded against authors, publishers, filmmakers, and news organizations.

No matter what happens with the law, gay Romanians have a long way to go before they can break through the cultural taboos against homosexuality. Even the Romanian League of Students has lobbied the parliament to strengthen the law against homosexuality.

"I have a friend in my dormitory who always says that I don't want to die until I beat a faggot to death," says Adrian Cuipe, a 19-year-old university student in Cluj. "I'd say that attitude is pretty common here."



## ACTIVITY 8: HANDOUT 5

### EDITOR'S FEEDBACK FORM

Please read your partner's letter and complete this form to give your partner useful feedback.

Name of letter writer:

Name of editor:

1. Does the letter use courteous and respectful language? If not, what language might be considered impolite or disrespectful? How else might the same idea be expressed more respectfully?
2. Is the letter clear in its statement of the human rights abuse? If not, where and how might the letter writer express these abuses?
3. Does the letter clearly state what actions the author would like to see the government official take? If not, where and how could the letter writer make such requests?
4. Is the letter free from grammatical and spelling errors? Does it look clean and professional? (Remember that proper grammar and spelling are a way to show respect to the recipient of the letter.) Underline any spelling or grammatical errors.

# PETITION FORM



*Women's rights and lesbian rights are linked in substantive ways. Both issues challenge how human rights distinctions between the private and public and reluctance to address female sexuality have perpetuated violations of women and kept them invisible. Further, the defense of lesbian rights is integral to the defense of all women's right to determine their own sexuality, to work at the jobs they prefer, and to live as they choose with women, men, children, or alone. Homophobia and fear of lesbianism is used to keep women in line—accepting their society's assigned gender roles and limitations.*

Charlotte Bunch,  
"Foreword,"

*Unspoken Rules: Sexual Orientation and Women's Human Rights*

## ACTIVITY 9

# TAKING THE HUMAN RIGHTS TEMPERATURE OF YOUR SCHOOL

### OVERVIEW

Participants evaluate their school's human rights climate using criteria derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The subsequent discussion builds towards identifying areas of particular concern and developing an action plan to begin addressing them.

### OBJECTIVES

- To examine thoughtfully and critically the human rights climate at students' school
- To connect the need for a safe school environment to international standards of human rights

**Age Level:** Middle school to adult

**Time:** 1-2 hours

**Materials:**

- Handout 1: *Taking the Human Rights Temperature of Your School*
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Subject Areas:** Social studies

### PROCEDURE

Ask students to evaluate their school's human rights climate, i.e. take its "temperature," by completing Handout 1: *Taking the Human Rights Temperature of Your School*. Prior to completing the survey, students might conduct research into school conditions, using the topics in the survey as a guide. Each student in the class should complete the survey individually. Although students are asked to think about their school's entire human rights climate, they should especially think about the school's climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students as well as straight allies and other students—gay and straight—dealing with homophobia.

Collect the surveys and compute the average response to each question. Post the responses on a chalkboard or newsprint version of the survey.

Discuss the findings from the survey:

- What are your reactions to the results of the survey?
- How did your own evaluation compare to the class averages?
- What might account for any differences between individual responses and class averages?

Draw on the following questions to move from analysis and evaluation to the development of an action plan:

#### Looking for patterns

- In which areas does your school appear to be adhering to or promoting human rights principles?
- In which areas do there seem to be human rights problems?
- Which of these are of particular concern to you? Elaborate on the areas of concern, providing examples and identifying patterns in human rights violations.

#### Looking for explanations

- How do you explain the existence of such problematic conditions?
- Do they have race/ethnicity, class, gender, disability, age, or sexual orientation dimensions?
- Are the issues related to participation in decision-making? Who is included and who isn't?
- Who benefits and who loses/suffers as a result of the existing human rights violations?

#### Looking at yourself

- Have you or any of your fellow community members contributed in any way to the construction and perpetuation of the existing climate (e.g. by acting or not acting in certain ways, by ignoring abuses or not reporting incidents)?

#### Looking at others

- Were those completing the questionnaire representative of the population of the school?
- Would you expect different results from a different group of people?
- In what ways might another group's responses differ and why?
- Should these differences be of any concern to you and to the school community?
- When determining which human rights concerns need to be addressed and how to address them, how can you be certain to take into account the perspectives and experiences of different people?



### Looking ahead

- What needs to be done to improve the human rights climate in your school?
- What action(s) can you and your group take to create a more humane and just environment where human rights values are promoted and human rights behaviors practiced?

Review survey item #25, stressing the importance of assuming responsibility and action. Then, as a group brainstorm possible actions that individuals and groups might take to improve the human rights situation. See Activity 1, Part 5, p. 13, – “Interrupting human rights violations in school” for one way to structure this part of the activity. The class should try to develop a short list of options for action. For each action, students should identify goals, strategies, and responsibilities.



## ACTIVITY 9: HANDOUT 1

# TAKING THE HUMAN RIGHTS TEMPERATURE OF YOUR SCHOOL

### Introduction

The questions below are adapted from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The relevant UDHR articles are included parenthetically in each statement. Some of these issues correlate more directly to the UDHR than others. All of these questions are related to the fundamental human right to education found in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration:

Everyone has the right to education... Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

When discrimination is mentioned in the questionnaire below, it refers to a wide range of conditions: race, ethnicity/culture, sex, physical/intellectual capacities, friendship associations, age, culture, disability, social class/financial status, physical appearance, sexual orientation, life style choices, nationality, and living space. Although this is a much more expansive list than that found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is more helpful in assessing the human rights temperature in your school community.

The results should provide a general sense of the school's climate in light of principles found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

### Directions

Take the human rights temperature of your school. Read each statement and assess how accurately it describes your school community in the blank next to it. Keep in mind all members of your school (e.g. students, teachers, administrators, staff.) At the end, total up your score to determine your overall assessment score for your school.

### RATING SCALE

---

|          |        |       |            |            |
|----------|--------|-------|------------|------------|
| 1        | 2      | 3     | 4          | DN         |
| no/never | rarely | often | yes/always | don't know |

## TAKING THE HUMAN RIGHTS TEMPERATURE OF YOUR SCHOOL

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. My school is a place where students are safe and secure. (Articles 3, 5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. All students receive equal information and encouragement about academic and career opportunities. (Article 2)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Members of the school community are not discriminated against because of their life style choices, such as manner of dress, association with certain people, and non-school activities. (Articles 2, 16)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. My school provides equal access, resources, activities, and scheduling accommodations for all individuals. (Articles 2, 7)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Members of my school community will oppose discriminatory or demeaning actions, materials, or slurs in the school. (Articles 2, 3, 7, 28, 29)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. When someone demeans or violates the rights of another person, the violator is helped to learn how to change his/her behavior. (Article 26)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Members of my school community care about my full human as well as academic development and try to help me when I am in need. (Articles 3, 22, 26, 29)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. When conflicts arise, we try to resolve them through non-violent ways. (Articles 3, 28)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Institutional policies and procedures are implemented when complaints of harassment or discrimination are submitted. (Articles 3, 7)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. In matters related to discipline (including suspension and expulsion), all persons are assured of fair, impartial treatment in the determination of guilt and assignment of punishment. (Articles 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. No one in our school is subjected to degrading treatment or punishment. (Article 5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Someone accused of wrong-doing is presumed innocent until proven guilty. (Article 11 )
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. My personal space and possessions are respected. (Articles 12, 17)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. My school community welcomes students, teachers, administrators, and staff from diverse backgrounds and cultures, including people not born in the USA. (Articles 2, 6, 13, 14, 15)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I have the liberty to express my beliefs and ideas (political, religious, cultural, or other) without fear of discrimination. (Article 19)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Members of my school can produce and disseminate publications without fear of censorship or punishment. (Article 19)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Diverse voices and perspectives (e.g. sexual orientation, gender, race/ethnicity, ideological) are represented in courses, textbooks, assemblies, libraries, and classroom instruction. (Articles 2, 19, 27)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I have the opportunity to express my culture through music, art, and writing. (Articles 19, 27, 28)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Members of my school have the opportunity to participate (individually and through associations) in democratic decision making processes to develop school policies and rules. (Articles 20, 21, 23)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Members of my school have the right to form associations within the school to advocate for their rights or the rights of others. (Articles 19, 20, 23)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Members of my school encourage each other to learn about societal and global problems related to justice, ecology, poverty, and peace. (Preamble & Articles 26, 29)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Members of my school encourage each other to organize and take action to address societal and global problems related to justice, ecology, poverty, and peace. (Preamble & Articles 20, 29)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Members of my school community are able to take adequate rest/recess time during the school day and work reasonable hours under fair work conditions. (Articles 23, 24)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. Employees in my school are paid enough to have a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being (including housing, food, necessary social services and security from unemployment, sickness and old age) of themselves and their families. (Articles 22, 25)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. I take responsibility in my school to ensure other individuals do not discriminate and that they behave in ways that promote the safety and well being of my school community. (Articles 1, 29)

TEMPERATURE POSSIBLE = 100 HUMAN RIGHTS DEGREES

YOUR SCHOOL'S TEMPERATURE \_\_\_\_\_

**Adapted from:** Shiman, David. *Teaching Human Rights*. Denver, CO: Center for Teaching International Relations, University of Denver, 1999. Written with Kristi Rudelius-Palmer.

**PART III:**

# Appendices

*Human rights and fundamental freedoms  
are the birthright of all human beings.*

Vienna Declaration  
Second World Conference on Human Rights, 1993

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*By asking only who you are—black, white, straight,  
gay, Chinese, Latino—we learn very little about  
what you believe or who you care about . . . Least  
of all does it lead us to imagine new arrangements of  
loving and living with each other that could subvert  
existing barriers of race, gender, and class.*

Frank Browning,  
Author

# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## Official Version

### PREAMBLE

**Whereas** recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

**Whereas** disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

**Whereas** it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

**Whereas** it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations

**Whereas** the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

**Whereas** Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

**Whereas** a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

**Now Therefore,**

### THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCLAIMS

**This Universal Declaration of Human Rights** as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

#### Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

#### Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

**Article 3**

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

**Article 4**

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

**Article 5**

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

**Article 6**

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

**Article 7**

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

**Article 8**

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

**Article 9**

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

**Article 10**

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

**Article 11**

1. Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.
2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offense on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offense, under national or international law at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offense was committed.

**Article 12**

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

**Article 13**

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

**Article 14**

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecution genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**Article 15**

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

**Article 16**

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

**Article 17**

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

**Article 18**

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

**Article 19**

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

**Article 20**

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

**Article 21**

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

#### **Article 22**

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

#### **Article 23**

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

#### **Article 24**

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

#### **Article 25**

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

#### **Article 26**

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

#### **Article 27**

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.



**Article 28**

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

**Article 29**

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**Article 30**

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, December 10, 1948.

# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## Kids' Version

By Little House Alternative Schools  
Dorchester, Massachusetts

### Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal. You are worth the same, and have the same rights as anyone else. You are born with the ability to think and to know right from wrong, and should act toward others in a spirit of friendliness.

### Article 2

Everyone should have all the rights and freedoms in this statement, no matter what race, sex, or color he or she may be. It shouldn't matter where you were born, what language you speak, what religion you are, what political opinions you have, or whether you're rich or poor. Everyone should have all of the rights in this statement.

### Article 3

Everyone has the right to live, to be free, and to feel safe.

### Article 4

No one should be held in slavery for any reason. The buying and selling of human beings should be prevented at all times.

### Article 5

No one shall be put through torture, or any other treatment or punishment that is cruel, or makes him or her feel less than human.

### Article 6

Everyone has the right to be accepted everywhere as a person, according to law.

### Article 7

You have the right to be treated equally by the law, and to have the same protection under the law as anyone else. Everyone should have protection from being treated in ways that go against this document, and from having anyone cause others to go against the rights in this document.

### Article 8

If your rights under the law are violated, you should have the right to fair and skillful judges who will see that justice is done.

### Article 9

No one shall be arrested, held in jail, or thrown and kept out of her or his own country for no good reason.

### Article 10

You have the same right as anyone else to a fair and public hearing by courts that will be open-minded and free to make their own decisions if you are ever accused of breaking the law, or if you have to go to court for some other reason.

#### **Article 11**

- 1) If you are blamed for a crime, you have the right to be thought of as innocent until you are proven guilty, according to the law, in a fair and public trial where you have the basic things you need to defend yourself.
- 2) No one shall be punished for anything that was not illegal when it happened. Nor can anyone be given a greater punishment than the one that applied when the crime was committed.

#### **Article 12**

No one has the right to butt-in to your privacy, home, or mail, or attack your honesty and self-respect for no good reason. Everyone has the right to have the law protect him or her against all such meddling or attacks.

#### **Article 13**

- 1) Within any country you have the right to go and live where you want.
- 2) You have the right to leave any country, including your own, and return to it when you want.

#### **Article 14**

- 1) Everyone has the right to seek shelter from harassment in another country.
- 2) This right does not apply in cases where the person has done something against the law that has nothing to do with politics, or when she or he has done something that is against what the United Nations is all about.

#### **Article 15**

- 1) You have a right to a country where you're from.
- 2) No one should be able to take you away from, or stop you from changing your country for no good reason.

#### **Article 16**

- 1) Grown men and women have the right to marry and start a family, without anyone trying to stop them or make it hard because of their race, country, or religion. Both partners have equal rights in getting married, during the marriage, and if and when they decide to end it.
- 2) A marriage shall take place only with the agreement of the couple.
- 3) The family is the basic part of society, and should be protected by it.

#### **Article 17**

- 1) Everyone has the right to have belongings that they can keep alone, or share with other people.
- 2) No one has the right to take your things away from you for no good reason.

#### **Article 18**

You have the right to believe the things you want to believe, to have ideas about right and wrong, and to believe in any religion you want. This includes the right to change your religion if you want, and to practice it without anybody interfering.

#### **Article 19**

You have the right to tell people how you feel about things without being told that you have to keep quiet. You have the right to read the newspaper or listen to the radio without someone trying to stop you, no matter where you live. Finally, you have the right to print your opinions in a newspaper or magazine, and send them anywhere without having someone try to stop you.

#### **Article 20**

- 1) You have the right to gather peacefully with people, and to be with anyone you want.
- 2) No one can force you to join or belong to any group.

#### **Article 21**

- 1) You have the right to be part of your government by being in it, or choosing the people who are in fair elections.
- 2) Everyone has the right to serve her or his country in some way.
- 3) The first job of any government is to do what its people want it to do. This means you have the right to have elections every so often, where each person's vote counts the same, and where everyone's vote is his or her own business.

#### **Article 22**

Everyone, as a person on this planet, has the right to have her or his basic needs met, and should have whatever it takes to live with pride, and become the person he or she wants to be. Every country or group of countries should do everything they possibly can to make this happen.

#### **Article 23**

- 1) You have the right to work and to choose your job, to have fair and safe working conditions, and to be protected against not having work.
- 2) You have the right to the same pay as anyone else who does the same work, without anyone playing favorites.
- 3) You have the right to decent pay so that you and your family can get by with pride. That means that if you don't get paid enough to do that, you should get other kinds of help.
- 4) You have the right to form or be part of a union that will serve and protect your interests.

#### **Article 24**

Everyone has the right to rest and relaxation, which includes limiting the number of hours he or she has to work, and allowing for holidays with pay once in a while.

#### **Article 25**

You have the right to have what you need to live a decent life, including food, clothes, a home, and medical care for you and your family. You have the right to get help from society if you're sick or unable to work, if you're older or a widow, or if you're in any other kind of situation that keeps you from working through no fault of your own.

#### **Article 26**

- 1) Everyone has the right to an education. It should be free of charge, and should be required for all, at least in the early years. Later education for jobs and college has to be there for anyone who wants it and is able to do it.

- 2) The idea of education is to help people become the best they can be. It should teach them to respect and understand each other, and to be kind to everyone, no matter who they are or where they are from. Education should help to promote the activities of the United Nations in an effort to create a peaceful world.

#### **Article 27**

- 1) You have the right to join in and be part of the world of art, music, and books. You have the right to enjoy the arts, and to share in the advantages that come from new discoveries in the sciences.
- 2) You have the right to get the credit and any profit that comes from something that you have written, made, or discovered.

#### **Article 28**

Everyone has the right to the kind of world where their rights and freedoms, such as the ones in this statement, are respected and made to happen.

#### **Article 29**

- 1) You have a responsibility to the place you live and the people around you—we all do. Only by watching out for each other can we each become our individual best.
- 2) In order to be free, there have to be laws and limits that respect everyone's rights, meet our sense of right and wrong, and keep the peace in a world where we all play an active part.
- 3) Nobody should use her or his freedom to go against what the United Nations is all about.

#### **Article 30**

There is nothing in this statement that says that anybody has the right to do anything that would weaken or take away these rights.



# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## (Abbreviated)

---

**Article 1**

Right to Equality

**Article 2**

Freedom from Discrimination

**Article 3**

Right to Life, Liberty, Personal Security

**Article 4**

Freedom from Slavery

**Article 5**

Freedom from Torture and Degrading Treatment

**Article 6**

Right to Recognition as a Person before the Law

**Article 7**

Right to Equality before the Law

**Article 8**

Right to Remedy by Competent Tribunal

**Article 9**

Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Exile

**Article 10**

Right to Fair Public Hearing

**Article 11**

Right to be Considered Innocent until Proven Guilty

**Article 12**

Freedom from Interference with Privacy, Family, Home and Correspondence

**Article 13**

Right to Free Movement in and out of the Country

**Article 14**

Right to Asylum in other Countries from Persecution

**Article 15**

Right to a Nationality and the Freedom to Change It

**Article 16**

Right to Marriage and Family

**Article 17**

Right to Own Property

**Article 18**

Freedom of Belief and Religion

**Article 19**

Freedom of Opinion and Information

**Article 20**

Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association

**Article 21**

Right to Participate in Government and in Free Elections

**Article 22**

Right to Social Security

**Article 23**

Right to Desirable Work and to Join Trade Unions

**Article 24**

Right to Rest and Leisure

**Article 25**

Right to Adequate Living Standard

**Article 26**

Right to Education

**Article 27**

Right to Participate in the Cultural Life of Community

**Article 28**

Right to a Social Order that Articulates this Document

**Article 29**

Community Duties Essential to Free and Full Development

**Article 30**

Freedom from State or Personal Interference in the above Rights

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

**All books are available from the GLSEN bookstore:  
800/247-6553 or <http://www.atlasbooks.com/glsen/>.**

- Bass, Ellen & Kate Kaufman. *Free Your Mind: The Book for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth – And Their Allies*. New York: Harper Collins, 1996.
- Boykin, Keith. *One More River to Cross: Black and Gay in America*. New York: Doubleday Books, 1996.
- Brown, Lester B. (Ed.). *Two Spirit People: American Indian Lesbian Women and Gay Men*. New York: Harrington Park Press, 1997.
- Chandler, Kurt. *Passages of Pride: Lesbian and Gay Youth Come of Age*. Los Angeles: Alyson Publishing, Inc., 1995.
- Elkins, Richard & Dave King. *Blending Genders: Social Aspects of Cross-dressing and Sex-changing*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Faderman, Lillian. *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth Century America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- Feinberg, Leslie. *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.
- Gillespie, Peggy, (Ed.). *Love Makes a Family: Portraits of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People and Their Families*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999.
- Griffin, Pat. *Strong Women, Deep Closets*. Illinois: Human Kinetics, 1998.
- Heron, Ann (Ed.). *Two Teenagers in Twenty: Writings by Gay and Lesbian Youth*. Boston: Alyson Publishing, Inc., 1995.
- Hogan, Steve & Lee Hudson. *Completely Queer: The Gay and Lesbian Encyclopedia*. New York: Henry Holt, 1998.
- Hutchings, Loraine & Lani Kaahumanu. *Bi Any Other Name*. Boston: Alyson Publishing, Inc., 1991.
- Jennings, Kevin (Ed.). *Becoming Visible: A Reader in Gay and Lesbian History for High School and College Students*. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1994.
- Jennings, Kevin (Ed.). *One Teacher in Ten: Gay and Lesbian Educators Tell Their Stories*. Boston: Alyson Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- Jennings, Kevin (Ed.). *Telling Tales Out of School*. Boston: Alyson Publishing, Inc., 1998.
- Kissen, Rita M. *The Last Closet: The Real Lives of Lesbian and Gay Teachers*. New York: Heinemann Press, 1996.
- Lipkin, Arthur. *Understanding Homosexuality, Changing Schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999.

- Marcus, Eric. *Is It a Choice?: Answers to 300 of the Most Frequently Asked Questions about Gays and Lesbians*. New York: Harper Collins, 1999.
- Mastoon, Adam. *The Shared Heart: Portraits and Stories Celebrating Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Young People*. New York: William Morrow, 1997.
- Moore, Lisa C. *Does Your Mama Know?: An Anthology of Black Lesbian Coming Out Stories*. Decatur, GA: Redbone Press, 1997.
- Ratti, Rakesh (Ed.). *A Lotus of Another Color: An Unfolding of the South Asian Gay and Lesbian Experience*. Boston: Alyson Publishing, Inc., 1993.
- Remafadi, Gary (Ed.). *Death by Denial: Studies of Suicide in Gay and Lesbian Teenagers*. Boston: Alyson Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- Ryan, Caitlin & Donna Futterman. *Lesbian and Gay Youth: Care and Counseling*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
- Sears, James & Walter Williams. *Overcoming Heterosexism and Homophobia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Seyda, Barbara & Diana Herrera. *Women In Love: Portraits of Lesbian Mothers and Their Families*. Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1998.
- Singer, Bennett L. (Ed.). *Growing Up Gay/Growing Up Lesbian: A Literary Anthology*. New York: New Press, 1994.
- Unks, Gerald (Ed.). *The Gay Teen: Educational Practice and Theory for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Adolescents*. New York: Routledge Press, 1995.
- Wood, Dan (Ed.). *Jocks: True Stories of America's Gay Male Athletes*. Los Angeles: Alyson Publishing Inc., 1998.
- Woog, Dan (Ed.). *Friends and Family: True Stories of Gay America's Straight Allies*. Los Angeles: Alyson Publishing, Inc., 1999.
- Woog, Dan (Ed.). *School's Out: The Impact of Gay and Lesbian Issues on America's Schools*. Los Angeles: Alyson Publishing, Inc., 1995.

## RECOMMENDED VIDEOS

**All videos are available from the GLSEN bookstore:  
800/247-6553 or <http://www.atlasbooks.com/glsen/>.**

Chasnoff, Debra & Helen Cohen. *It's Elementary*. San Francisco: Women's Educational Media. Real teachers addressing elementary students on LGBT issues. 37 min.

Dupre, Jeff. (1998). *Out of the Past*. New York: Unapix/Apix Entertainment. Traces the emergence of gay men and lesbians in American history through the eyes of a young woman coming to terms with herself. Winner: Sundance Film Festival Audience Award for Best Documentary; Bronze Apple, National Educational Media Foundation. Includes teacher guide that can be distributed separately. 65 min.

GLSEN. (1998). *I Just Want to Say*. New York. A panel of parents, students and teachers talk about anti-gay bias in our schools. Hosted by Martina Navratilova. 13 min.

GLSEN Miami. (1996). *Reaching Out*. Miami. Contemporary stories of LGBT youth are told by the people who live them and the educators who help them. 21 min.

GLSEN. (1996). *Teaching Respect for All*. New York. Kevin Jennings, Executive Director of GLSEN, presents a comprehensive training video dealing with anti-gay bias in schools. 52 min.

*In the Life: Back to School*. (1997). New York. Award winning public television news magazine series. Episode includes segments on Gay-Straight Alliances, supportive Mormon families, youth suicide, the Ex-Gay movement, and gay youth support services around the country. 57 min.

Lesbian and Gay Parents Association. (1994). *Both of My Mom's Names Are Judy*. San Francisco. Children ages 7-11 candidly discussing their families, playground teasing, and classroom silence. Includes instructional guide. 11 min.

Perego, Louis. (1998). *I Know Who I Am... Do You?* New York: Skyline Community. Documentary featuring Black and Latino gay and lesbian youth successfully reaching for their goals, despite issues of discrimination and its correlation with teen struggles. 10 min.

Salmon, Norah. (1998). *Lesbian Teenagers in High School*. A documentary about young women's experiences in high school. Touches on race and homophobia and addressing this issue for students of color. 23 min.

Walton, Pam. (1995). *Gay Youth*. Wolf Video. Details the lives of two remarkable young people, showing that information, acceptance, and support can make an enormous difference to LGBT youth. 40 min.

Women Vision, The National Gay and lesbian Task Force, and The National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum. (1996). *All God's Children*. San Francisco. Award winning documentary chronicling the Black church's acceptance of African American lesbians and gays. Includes classroom study guide. 26 min.

Women Vision. (1994). *Straight from the Heart*. San Francisco. A video containing stories of parents' journeys to a new understanding of their LGB children. Includes classroom study guide. 25 min.

## **RECOMMENDED WEBSITES**

### **Amnesty International – OUTfront**

[www.amnestyusa.org/group/outfront](http://www.amnestyusa.org/group/outfront)

Amnesty International USA's OUTfront Program, a membership network for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) human rights, works to—

- Promote human rights standards at the international and local level that protect the basic human rights of LGBT people;
- Combat specific human rights violations against LGBT people around the world;
- Supporting Amnesty International's research department in increasing the documentation of violations against LGBT people;
- Raising public awareness of human rights abuses based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity;
- Mobilizing people in the USA, and around the world, to take action to protect the human rights of LGBT people.

### **COLAGE – Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere**

[www.COLAGE.org](http://www.COLAGE.org)

As their website says, "COLAGE is the best (well okay, the only) support and advocacy organization for daughters and sons of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents." The group fosters the growth of daughters and sons of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender parents of all racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds by providing education, support, and community on local and international levels. They also promote acceptance and awareness in society that love makes a family and advocate for the rights of children of LGBT parents and their families. COLAGE has about 1,500 members, mostly children with gay parents, though some are parents or prospective parents, as well as other organizations and allies. Most members are between 12-18.

### **GLSEN – Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network**

[www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

GLSEN works to assure that each member of every K-12 school community is valued and respected, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Founded as a volunteer group in Boston in 1990, GLSEN led the fight that made Massachusetts one of the first states to ban anti-gay discrimination in its public schools in 1993. GLSEN went national in 1994 and has since become one of the nation's leading voices for equality and safety in the educational system. GLSEN is a network of 85 chapters whose members educate local, state, and national school officials about the need to pass non-discrimination policies in schools, train teachers to prevent anti-gay name calling, and serve as a community resource for teachers, parents, and students grappling with LGBT issues. The organization also sponsors a Student Pride Project, provides resources and technical support to over 400 high school-based Gay-Straight Alliances, creates and distributes teacher training materials and LGBT-inclusive curricular resources to elementary and secondary schools across the country.



**International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission**  
[www.iglhrc.org](http://www.iglhrc.org)

IGLHRC's mission is to protect and advance the human rights of all people and communities subject to discrimination or abuse on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status. A US-based non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO), IGLHRC responds to such human rights violations around the world through documentation, advocacy, coalition building, public education, and technical assistance. The organization's overarching commitment is to defend the rights of people worldwide to define their own sexuality and gender identities and to support the efforts of individuals and groups to organize to create societies free from heterosexism and homophobia.

**International Lesbian and Gay Association - ILGA**  
[www.ilga.org](http://www.ilga.org)

The International Lesbian and Gay Association is a world-wide federation of national and local groups dedicated to achieving equal rights for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender people. Founded in 1978, it is an umbrella group of more than 350 member organizations in 80 countries. ILGA focuses public and government attention on cases of discrimination against lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender people by supporting programs and protest actions, asserting diplomatic pressure, providing information, and working with international organizations and media. ILGA has sponsored international campaigns to decriminalize homosexuality in New Zealand, Russia, Ireland and other countries. ILGA helped create and support many countries' first autonomous lesbian and gay groups in Latin America and Asia. They contributed to the growth of a democratic, multiracial lesbian and gay movement in South Africa and played a crucial role in the development of the first gay and lesbian organizations in Eastern Europe. Their website contains information about world events and urgent actions.

**Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund**  
[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

Lambda is the oldest and largest legal organization in the United States working for the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, and people with HIV/AIDS. Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, and people with HIV/AIDS through litigation, education, and public policy work. Lambda carries out its legal work principally through test cases selected for the likelihood of their success in establishing positive legal precedents that will affect lesbians, gay men, and people with HIV/AIDS on issues such as discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and the military; HIV/AIDS-related discrimination and public policy issues; parenting and relationship issues; equal marriage rights; equal employment and domestic partnership benefits; "sodomy" law challenges; immigration issues; anti-gay initiatives; and free speech and equal protection rights.

**Massachusetts Department of Education – Gay-Straight Alliances**  
[www.doe.mass.edu/doedocs/GSA](http://www.doe.mass.edu/doedocs/GSA)

Massachusetts was the first state to pass legislation protecting the rights of gay and lesbian students. This site provides advice to students and staff for creating a gay-straight alliance at school, including ideas on how to hold meetings and activities to address homophobia. Much of this site came from ideas, suggestions, and experiences of students and staff in Massachusetts.

**PFLAG Parents Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays**  
[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays is a national organization that promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, their families and friends through support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

**P.E.R.S.O.N. Project**  
[www.youth.org/loco/PERSONProject](http://www.youth.org/loco/PERSONProject)

The P.E.R.S.O.N. Project is an informal, national network of organizations and individuals working to ensure that fair, accurate, and unbiased information regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and about the nature and diversity of sexual orientation is presented to young people as part of public school education. Advocates for The P.E.R.S.O.N. Project provide testimony before state and local boards of education, meet with educational policy makers at all levels of government, inform the public about educational equity issues, and furnish various resources for addressing these subjects in the classroom. They work for an end to the censorship of information about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities in textbooks, course content, resource materials, and library offerings associated with public education.

**Project 10**  
[www.project10.org](http://www.project10.org)

Project 10 is the nation's first public school program providing on-site support to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth. It began in 1984 at Fairfax High School in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Their website was developed in order to give teachers, counselors, and administrators assistance in providing similar services in their own schools or school districts. Project 10 also sponsors the annual Models of Pride Conference, the Models of Excellence Scholarship Program, the Gay and Lesbian Youth Prom, Youth Lobby Day, and Administrative Training Seminars.

**Washington High School Gay-Straight Alliance, Fremont, California**  
<http://members.xoom.com/gsa>

This site is a model for other GSAs. It includes information about upcoming meetings, the group's constitution, club goals, expectations of GSA members, club policies, tips on what GSAs should and should not do, as well as links to useful information for LGBT youth and organizations working with LGBT and questioning youth.

# LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER RIGHTS

## A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

BY DAVID M. DONAHUE

### ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION SERIES

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights: A Human Rights Perspective* is Topic Book 3 in the Human Rights Education Series.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights exhorts that "every individual and every organ of society . . . strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedom." Published by the Human Rights Resource Center at the University of Minnesota, the *Human Rights Education Series* seeks to meet this responsibility by providing resources for the ever-growing body of educators and activists seeking to build a culture of human rights, especially in the United States. The Human Rights Education Series editor is Nancy Flowers.

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*by LORI DUPONT, JOANNE FOLEY, and ANNETTE GAGLIARDI*

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**David M. Donahue** is an assistant professor of education at Mills College in Oakland, California. Drawing on experience as a secondary school teacher, he is now a teacher educator and curriculum writer. He has worked with educators in the USA and abroad to design and implement human rights education programs on a range of issues including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender human rights.

### ABOUT THE PUBLICATION PARTNERS

**Amnesty International** is a worldwide voluntary activist movement working towards the observance of all human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards.

**The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network** works to assure that each member of every K-12 school community is valued and respected, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

**The Human Rights Resource Center at the University of Minnesota** fosters all learning that develops the knowledge, skills, and values needed to build a universal culture of human rights, especially in the United States.

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